Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

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Contents

Addresses to the Nation

State of the Union—94

Addresses and Remarks

African-American clergy, spouses—93
Arizona, Mesa Community College in Phoenix—107
March for Life, telephone remarks—113
New Mexico, remarks in Roswell—113
Ohio, Owens Community College in Perrysburg Township—101
Radio address—93
U.S. Conference of Mayors—123
World Series champion Florida Marlins—131

Appointments and Nominations

U.S. Court of Appeals, recess appointment of Charles W. Pickering, statement—91

Communications to Congress

Bosnia and Herzegovina, letter transmitting report on continued operations of U.S. Forces—123
Bulgaria-U.S. Treaty Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, message transmitting additional protocol—112
Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, letter on review of Title III—92

Communications to Congress—Continued

Terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process, letter on continuation of national emergency—92

Interviews With the News Media

Exchange with reporters in Roswell, NM—122

Notices

Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process—91

Statements by the President

See also Appointments and Nominations
Senate action on the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004"
Inaction—94
Passage—122

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—136
Checklist of White House press releases—136
Digest of other White House announcements—133
Nominations submitted to the Senate—134

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, January 23, 2004

Statement on the Recess Appointment of Charles W. Pickering To Serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

January 16, 2004

Today I was proud to exercise my constitutional authority to appoint Judge Charles W. Pickering to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Judge Pickering has served with distinction as a United States District Judge since he was unanimously confirmed by the Senate in 1990. He is highly qualified to serve on the Court of Appeals and has widespread bipartisan support from those who know him best.

For the past 2½ years, Judge Pickering has been waiting for an up-or-down vote in the Senate. A bipartisan majority of Senators supports his confirmation, and if he were given a vote, he would be confirmed. But a minority of Democratic Senators has been using unprecedented obstructionist tactics to prevent him and other qualified individuals from receiving up-or-down votes. Their tactics are inconsistent with the Senate's constitutional responsibility and are hurting our judicial system.

As a result of today's recess appointment, Judge Pickering will fill a seat on the Fifth Circuit that has been designated a judicial emergency. He will perform a valuable service on a court that needs more judges to do its work with the efficiency the American people deserve and expect. Again I call on the Senate to stop playing politics with the American judicial system and to give my nominees the up-or-down votes they deserve.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 16, 2004

On January 23, 1995, by Executive Order 12947, the President declared a national emergency pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process. On August 20, 1998, by Executive Order 13099, the President modified the Annex to Executive Order 12947 to identify four additional persons, including Usama bin Laden, who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

Because these terrorist activities continue to threaten the Middle East peace process and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, the national emergency declared on January 23, 1995, as expanded on August 20, 1998, and the measures adopted on those dates to deal with that emergency must continue in effect beyond January 23, 2004. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to foreign terrorists who

threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 16, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:21 a.m., January 20, 2004]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on January 21. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 16, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2004, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 2003 (68 *FR* 3161).

The crisis with respect to the grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, as expanded on August 20, 1998, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process and that are hostile to United States interests in the region. Such actions constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and to maintain in force the economic sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 16, 2004

Dear _____ *:*

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114), (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 2004, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Richard G. Lugar, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address
January 17, 2004

Good morning. This coming week, I will report to the Congress and the American people on the state of our Union. Over the past few years, America has been confronted with great challenges, and the American people have responded with strength and compassion and confidence. This Nation is meeting its priorities, both at home and abroad.

America continues to wage a relentless campaign against terrorists who threaten our country. We're fighting this war on the offensive, denying terrorists refuge, identifying and seizing their secret finances, and holding terrorists and their sponsors to account. These terrorists are still dangerous, and we will stay on the hunt until they are destroyed.

Across the greater Middle East, America is confronting dangers and promoting democracy and hope as the alternative to terror and violence. Afghanistan, once ruled by the brutal Taliban regime, has adopted a new constitution and is following the path of democracy, including providing fundamental rights to women.

The leader of Libya has now pledged to disclose and dismantle all of his weapons of mass destruction programs. And in Iraq, the enemies of freedom are being systematically routed from their holes and rounded up. Iraqis are assuming greater responsibility for their own security and future Government. American troops in that country are performing their duty with skill and courage, and we're proud of them all.

Here at home, we continue to build prosperity and economic security for our people. Tax relief has helped turn our economy around. We've doubled the child tax credit, cut taxes for everyone who pays income taxes, and increased incentives for small businesses to invest in new equipment and create jobs.

The results are clear. Our economy grew at its fastest pace in two decades in the third quarter of 2003. Manufacturers are seeing a rebound in new orders in factory activity, and more than a quarter-million new jobs have been created since August.

Our Government has also acted to strengthen our Medicare system. To keep our commitment to America's senior citizens, we're adding better preventative care and a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. Many thought these reforms were impossible, yet members of both parties put old debates behind them and fulfilled our promise to America's seniors.

On Tuesday night, I will outline the steps we must take to meet the goals of this Nation. We will work to expand opportunities for all Americans to own their own business. We'll press forward on an agenda of economic growth so that everyone who wants to work can find a job. We'll take steps to help families and small businesses deal with the rising cost of health care. We will continue to help schools and students meet the high standards we've set so no child in America is left behind. We will encourage the good work of faith-based groups that bring hope to those in need. For the sake of our own freedom and security, we will continue to fight the war on terror.

With all these actions, we will continue to confront the challenges of our time, and we will continue to make America a more secure, more prosperous, and more hopeful place.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:20 a.m. on January 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a Luncheon With Spouses of African-American Clergy
January 19, 2004

Thank you all. Please be seated. I have dropped by—[*laughter*]—because Laura told me to. [*Laughter*]

First of all, I want to welcome you all to the people's house, and I am so glad you've come to celebrate this important national holiday with Laura. My job is to introduce her so she can give some remarks. But before I do so, first of all I want to say thanks from

the bottom of my heart for what you and your husbands and your communities do to help, really, America realize the dream of Martin Luther King, which is to elevate the dignity of each person, the worth of each person, the freedom of each person to realize his or her dreams.

In my judgment, many times the most effective programs to realize that national ambition is through our faith community, because people of faith have heard a universal call. I remember when my friend Tony Evans from Dallas one time talked about broken foundations, cracks on the wall. And the painter kept trying to repaint the wall of the house, and they could never get it right until, finally, somebody stepped up to them and said, "First you need to fix the foundation." It's that spirit of fixing foundations and helping people realize their true worth, through love and compassion and a—the truth of the matter is—reliance on a being far greater than Government, the Almighty, that enables you all to do the works of mercy and kindness and neighborhood healing that goes on. The true strength of America truly is found in the hearts and souls of our citizens. And in my judgment, a way to honor the great Martin Luther King is to call upon Americans to unleash that compassion.

And so I want to welcome you here. You're generals in the armies of compassion who are changing America one heart and one soul and one conscience at a time, and for that, our Nation is grateful.

And I am grateful that Laura said yes when I asked her to marry me. [*Laughter*] Our First Lady.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:22 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony T. Evans, senior pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Inaction on Appropriations Legislation

January 20, 2004

Today a minority in the Senate denied a vote on a spending bill that is 4 months overdue and that fulfills important commitments: commitments to veterans who need health care; to Africans suffering from AIDS; to FBI agents fighting terror; to children learning to read in our Nation's public schools. This bill stays within the spending limits I proposed. And the Senate needs to pass it.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

January 20, 2004

Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: America this evening is a nation called to great responsibilities, and we are rising to meet them.

As we gather tonight, hundreds of thousands of American service men and women are deployed across the world in the war on terror. By bringing hope to the oppressed and delivering justice to the violent, they are making America more secure.

Each day, law enforcement personnel and intelligence officers are tracking terrorist threats; analysts are examining airline passenger lists; the men and women of our new Homeland Security Department are patrolling our coasts and borders. And their vigilance is protecting America.

Americans are proving once again to be the hardest working people in the world. The American economy is growing stronger. The tax relief you passed is working.

Tonight Members of Congress can take pride in the great works of compassion and reform that skeptics had thought impossible. You're raising the standards for our public schools, and you are giving our senior citizens prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

We have faced serious challenges together, and now we face a choice: We can go forward

with confidence and resolve, or we can turn back to the dangerous illusion that terrorists are not plotting and outlaw regimes are no threat to us. We can press on with economic growth and reforms in education and Medicare, or we can turn back to old policies and old divisions.

We've not come all this way, through tragedy and trial and war, only to falter and leave our work unfinished. Americans are rising to the tasks of history, and they expect the same from us. In their efforts, their enterprise, and their character, the American people are showing that the state of our Union is confident and strong.

Our greatest responsibility is the active defense of the American people. Twenty-eight months have passed since September the 11th, 2001—over 2 years without an attack on American soil. And it is tempting to believe that the danger is behind us. That hope is understandable, comforting—and false. The killing has continued in Bali, Jakarta, Casablanca, Riyadh, Mombasa, Jerusalem, Istanbul, and Baghdad. The terrorists continue to plot against America and the civilized world. And by our will and courage, this danger will be defeated.

Inside the United States, where the war began, we must continue to give our homeland security and law enforcement personnel every tool they need to defend us. And one of those essential tools is the PATRIOT Act, which allows Federal law enforcement to better share information to track terrorists, to disrupt their cells, and to seize their assets. For years, we have used similar provisions to catch embezzlers and drug traffickers. If these methods are good for hunting criminals, they are even more important for hunting terrorists.

Key provisions of the PATRIOT Act are set to expire next year. The terrorist threat will not expire on that schedule. Our law enforcement needs this vital legislation to protect our citizens. You need to renew the PATRIOT Act.

America is on the offensive against the terrorists who started this war. Last March, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, a mastermind of September the 11th, awoke to find himself in the custody of U.S. and Pakistani authorities. Last August the 11th brought the capture of the terrorist Hambali, who was a key player in the attack in Indonesia that killed over 200 people. We're tracking Al Qaida around the world, and nearly two-thirds of their known leaders have now been captured or killed. Thousands of very skilled and determined military personnel are on the manhunt, going after the remaining killers who hide in cities and caves, and one by one, we will bring these terrorists to justice.

As part of the offensive against terror, we are also confronting the regimes that harbor and support terrorists and could supply them with nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. The United States and our allies are determined: We refuse to live in the shadow of this ultimate danger.

The first to see our determination were the Taliban, who made Afghanistan the primary training base of Al Qaida killers. As of this month, that country has a new constitution guaranteeing free elections and full participation by women. Businesses are opening. Health care centers are being established, and the boys and girls of Afghanistan are back in school. With the help from the new Afghan army, our coalition is leading aggressive raids against the surviving members of the Taliban and Al Qaida. The men and women of Afghanistan are building a nation that is free and proud and fighting terror, and America is honored to be their friend.

Since we last met in this Chamber, combat forces of the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Poland, and other countries enforced the demands of the United Nations, ended the rule of Saddam Hussein, and the people of Iraq are free.

Having broken the Ba'athist regime, we face a remnant of violent Saddam supporters. Men who ran away from our troops in battle are now dispersed and attack from the shadows. These killers, joined by foreign terrorists, are a serious, continuing danger. Yet we're making progress against them. The once all-powerful ruler of Iraq was found in a hole and now sits in a prison cell. Of the top 55 officials of the former regime, we have captured or killed 45. Our forces are on the offensive, leading over 1,600 patrols a day and conducting an average of 180 raids a week. We are dealing with these thugs in

Iraq just as surely as we dealt with Saddam Hussein's evil regime.

The work of building a new Iraq is hard, and it is right. And America has always been willing to do what it takes for what is right. Last January, Iraq's only law was the whim of one brutal man. Today, our coalition is working with the Iraqi Governing Council to draft a basic law with a bill of rights. We're working with Iraqis and the United Nations to prepare for a transition to full Iraqi sovereignty by the end of June.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, the enemies of freedom will do all in their power to spread violence and fear. They are trying to shake the will of our country and our friends, but the United States of America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins. The killers will fail, and the Iraqi people will live in freedom.

Month by month, Iraqis are assuming more responsibility for their own security and their own future. And tonight we are honored to welcome one of Iraq's most respected leaders, the current President of the Iraqi Governing Council, Adnan Pachachi.

Sir, America stands with you and the Iraqi people as you build a free and peaceful nation.

Because of American leadership and resolve, the world is changing for the better. Last month, the leader of Libya voluntarily pledged to disclose and dismantle all of his regime's weapons of mass destruction programs, including a uranium enrichment project for nuclear weapons. Colonel Qadhafi correctly judged that his country would be better off and far more secure without weapons of mass murder.

Nine months of intense negotiations involving the United States and Great Britain succeeded with Libya, while 12 years of diplomacy with Iraq did not. And one reason is clear: For diplomacy to be effective, words must be credible, and no one can now doubt the word of America.

Different threats require different strategies. Along with nations in the region, we're insisting that North Korea eliminate its nuclear program. America and the international community are demanding that Iran meet its commitments and not develop nuclear weapons. America is committed to keeping the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the most dangerous regimes.

When I came to this rostrum on September the 20th, 2001, I brought the police shield of a fallen officer, my reminder of lives that ended and a task that does not end. I gave to you and to all Americans my complete commitment to securing our country and defeating our enemies. And this pledge, given by one, has been kept by many.

You in the Congress have provided the resources for our defense and cast the difficult votes of war and peace. Our closest allies have been unwavering. America's intelligence personnel and diplomats have been skilled and tireless. And the men and women of the American military—they have taken the hardest duty. We've seen their skill and their courage in armored charges and midnight raids and lonely hours on faithful watch. We have seen the joy when they return and felt the sorrow when one is lost. I've had the honor of meeting our service men and women at many posts, from the deck of a carrier in the Pacific to a mess hall in Baghdad.

Many of our troops are listening tonight, and I want you and your families to know: America is proud of you. And my administration and this Congress will give you the resources you need to fight and win the war on terror.

I know that some people question if America is really in a war at all. They view terrorism more as a crime, a problem to be solved mainly with law enforcement and indictments. After the World Trade Center was first attacked in 1993, some of the guilty were indicted and tried and convicted and sent to prison. But the matter was not settled. The terrorists were still training and plotting in other nations and drawing up more ambitious plans. After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. The terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States, and war is what they got.

Some in this Chamber and in our country did not support the liberation of Iraq. Objections to war often come from principled motives, but let us be candid about the consequences of leaving Saddam Hussein in power. We're seeking all the facts. Already,

the Kay Report identified dozens of weapons-of-mass-destruction-related program activities and significant amounts of equipment that Iraq concealed from the United Nations. Had we failed to act, the dictator's weapons of mass destruction programs would continue to this day. Had we failed to act, Security Council resolutions on Iraq would have been revealed as empty threats, weakening the United Nations and encouraging defiance by dictators around the world. Iraq's torture chambers would still be filled with victims, terrified and innocent. The killing fields of Iraq, where hundreds of thousands of men and women and children vanished into the sands, would still be known only to the killers. For all who love freedom and peace, the world without Saddam Hussein's regime is a better and safer place.

Some critics have said our duties in Iraq must be internationalized. This particular criticism is hard to explain to our partners in Britain, Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Italy, Spain, Poland, Denmark, Hungary, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, the Netherlands, Norway, El Salvador, and the 17 other countries that have committed troops to Iraq. As we debate at home, we must never ignore the vital contributions of our international partners or dismiss their sacrifices.

From the beginning, America has sought international support for our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and we have gained much support. There is a difference, however, between leading a coalition of many nations and submitting to the objections of a few. America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our country.

We also hear doubts that democracy is a realistic goal for the greater Middle East, where freedom is rare. Yet it is mistaken and condescending to assume that whole cultures and great religions are incompatible with liberty and self-government. I believe that God has planted in every human heart the desire to live in freedom. And even when that desire is crushed by tyranny for decades, it will rise again.

As long as the Middle East remains a place of tyranny and despair and anger, it will continue to produce men and movements that threaten the safety of America and our friends. So America is pursuing a forward strategy of freedom in the greater Middle East. We will challenge the enemies of reform, confront the allies of terror, and expect a higher standard from our friend. To cut through the barriers of hateful propaganda, the Voice of America and other broadcast services are expanding their programming in Arabic and Persian, and soon a new television service will begin providing reliable news and information across the region. I will send you a proposal to double the budget of the National Endowment for Democracy and to focus its new work on the development of free elections and free markets, free press, and free labor unions in the Middle East. And above all, we will finish the historic work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq so those nations can light the way for others and help transform a troubled part of the world.

America is a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is a democratic peace, a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman. America acts in this cause with friends and allies at our side, yet we understand our special calling: This great Republic will lead the cause of freedom.

In the last 3 years, adversity has also revealed the fundamental strengths of the American economy. We have come through recession and terrorist attack and corporate scandals and the uncertainties of war. And because you acted to stimulate our economy with tax relief, this economy is strong and growing stronger.

You have doubled the child tax credit from 500 to $1,000, reduced the marriage penalty, begun to phase out the death tax, reduced taxes on capital gains and stock dividends, cut taxes on small businesses, and you have lowered taxes for every American who pays income taxes.

Americans took those dollars and put them to work, driving this economy forward. The pace of economic growth in the third quarter of 2003 was the fastest in nearly 20 years; new home construction, the highest in almost 20 years; homeownership rates, the highest ever. Manufacturing activity is increasing. Inflation is low. Interest rates are low. Exports

are growing. Productivity is high, and jobs are on the rise. These numbers confirm that the American people are using their money far better than Government would have, and you were right to return it.

America's growing economy is also a changing economy. As technology transforms the way almost every job is done, America becomes more productive, and workers need new skills. Much of our job growth will be found in high-skilled fields like health care and biotechnology. So we must respond by helping more Americans gain the skills to find good jobs in our new economy.

All skills begin with the basics of reading and math, which are supposed to be learned in the early grades of our schools. Yet for too long, for too many children, those skills were never mastered. By passing the No Child Left Behind Act, you have made the expectation of literacy the law of our country. We're providing more funding for our schools, a 36-percent increase since 2001. We're requiring higher standards. We are regularly testing every child on the fundamentals. We are reporting results to parents and making sure they have better options when schools are not performing. We are making progress toward excellence for every child in America.

But the status quo always has defenders. Some want to undermine the No Child Left Behind Act by weakening standards and accountability. Yet the results we require are really a matter of common sense: We expect third graders to read and do math at the third grade level, and that's not asking too much. Testing is the only way to identify and help students who are falling behind. This Nation will not go back to the days of simply shuffling children along from grade to grade without them learning the basics. I refuse to give up on any child, and the No Child Left Behind Act is opening the door of opportunity to all of America's children.

At the same time, we must ensure that older students and adults can gain the skills they need to find work now. Many of the fastest growing occupations require strong math and science preparation and training beyond the high school level. So tonight, I propose a series of measures called Jobs for the 21st Century. This program will provide extra help to middle and high school students who fall behind in reading and math, expand advanced placement programs in low-income schools, invite math and science professionals from the private sector to teach part-time in our high schools. I propose larger Pell grants for students who prepare for college with demanding courses in high school. I propose increasing our support for America's fine community colleges, so they can—I do so, so they can train workers for industries that are creating the most new jobs. By all these actions, we'll help more and more Americans to join in the growing prosperity of our country. Job training is important, and so is job creation. We must continue to pursue an aggressive, progrowth economic agenda.

Congress has some unfinished business on the issue of taxes. The tax reductions you passed are set to expire. Unless you act, the unfair tax on marriage will go back up. Unless you act, millions of families will be charged $300 more in Federal taxes for every child. Unless you act, small businesses will pay higher taxes. Unless you act, the death tax will eventually come back to life. Unless you act, Americans face a tax increase. What Congress has given, the Congress should not take away. For the sake of job growth, the tax cuts you passed should be permanent.

Our agenda for jobs and growth must help small-business owners and employees with relief from needless Federal regulation and protect them from junk and frivolous lawsuits.

Consumers and businesses need reliable supplies of energy to make our economy run, so I urge you to pass legislation to modernize our electricity system, promote conservation, and make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

My administration is promoting free and fair trade to open up new markets for America's entrepreneurs and manufacturers and farmers, to create jobs for American workers. Younger workers should have the opportunity to build a nest egg by saving part of their Social Security taxes in a personal retirement account. We should make the Social Security system a source of ownership for the American people. And we should limit the burden of Government on this economy by acting as good stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

In 2 weeks, I will send you a budget that funds the war, protects the homeland, and meets important domestic needs while limiting the growth in discretionary spending to less than 4 percent. This will require that Congress focus on priorities, cut wasteful spending, and be wise with the people's money. By doing so, we can cut the deficit in half over the next 5 years.

Tonight I also ask you to reform our immigration laws so they reflect our values and benefit our economy. I propose a new temporary-worker program to match willing foreign workers with willing employers when no Americans can be found to fill the job. This reform will be good for our economy because employers will find needed workers in an honest and orderly system. A temporary-worker program will help protect our homeland, allowing Border Patrol and law enforcement to focus on true threats to our national security.

I oppose amnesty, because it would encourage further illegal immigration and unfairly reward those who break our laws. My temporary-worker program will preserve the citizenship path for those who respect the law while bringing millions of hard-working men and women out from the shadows of American life.

Our Nation's health care system, like our economy, is also in a time of change. Amazing medical technologies are improving and saving lives. This dramatic progress has brought its own challenge, in the rising costs of medical care and health insurance. Members of Congress, we must work together to help control those costs and extend the benefits of modern medicine throughout our country.

Meeting these goals requires bipartisan effort, and 2 months ago, you showed the way. By strengthening Medicare and adding a prescription drug benefit, you kept a basic commitment to our seniors. You are giving them the modern medicine they deserve.

Starting this year, under the law you passed, seniors can choose to receive a drug discount card, saving them 10 to 25 percent off the retail price of most prescription drugs, and millions of low-income seniors can get an additional $600 to buy medicine. Beginning next year, seniors will have new coverage for preventive screenings against diabetes and heart disease, and seniors just entering Medicare can receive wellness exams.

In January of 2006, seniors can get prescription drug coverage under Medicare. For a monthly premium of about $35, most seniors who do not have that coverage today can expect to see their drug bills cut roughly in half. Under this reform, senior citizens will be able to keep their Medicare just as it is, or they can choose a Medicare plan that fits them best, just as you, as Members of Congress, can choose an insurance plan that meets your needs. And starting this year, millions of Americans will be able to save money tax-free for their medical expenses in a health savings account.

I signed this measure proudly, and any attempt to limit the choices of our seniors or to take away their prescription drug coverage under Medicare will meet my veto.

On the critical issue of health care, our goal is to ensure that Americans can choose and afford private health care coverage that best fits their individual needs. To make insurance more affordable, Congress must act to address rapidly rising health care costs. Small businesses should be able to band together and negotiate for lower insurance rates, so they can cover more workers with health insurance. I urge you to pass association health plans. I ask you to give lower income Americans a refundable tax credit that would allow millions to buy their own basic health insurance.

By computerizing health records, we can avoid dangerous medical mistakes, reduce costs, and improve care. To protect the doctor-patient relationship and keep good doctors doing good work, we must eliminate wasteful and frivolous medical lawsuits. And tonight I propose that individuals who buy catastrophic health care coverage as part of our new health savings accounts be allowed to deduct 100 percent of the premiums from their taxes.

A Government-run health care system is the wrong prescription. By keeping costs under control, expanding access, and helping more Americans afford coverage, we will preserve the system of private medicine that makes America's health care the best in the world.

We are living in a time of great change in our world, in our economy, in science and medicine. Yet some things endure: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity, respect for differences of faith and race. The values we try to live by never change, and they are instilled in us by fundamental institutions such as families and schools and religious congregations. These institutions, these unseen pillars of civilization, must remain strong in America, and we will defend them. We must stand with our families to help them raise healthy, responsible children. When it comes to helping children make right choices, there is work for all of us to do.

One of the worst decisions our children can make is to gamble their lives and futures on drugs. Our Government is helping parents confront this problem with aggressive education, treatment, and law enforcement. Drug use in high school has declined by 11 percent over the last 2 years. Four hundred thousand fewer young people are using illegal drugs than in the year 2001. In my budget, I propose new funding to continue our aggressive, community-based strategy to reduce demand for illegal drugs. Drug testing in our schools has proven to be an effective part of this effort. So tonight I propose an additional 23 million for schools that want to use drug testing as a tool to save children's lives. The aim here is not to punish children but to send them this message: We love you, and we do not want to lose you.

To help children make right choices, they need good examples. Athletics play such an important role in our society, but unfortunately, some in professional sports are not setting much of an example. The use of performance-enhancing drugs like steroids in baseball, football, and other sports is dangerous, and it sends the wrong message, that there are shortcuts to accomplishment and that performance is more important than character. So tonight I call on team owners, union representatives, coaches, and players to take the lead, to send the right signal, to get tough, and to get rid of steroids now.

To encourage right choices, we must be willing to confront the dangers young people face, even when they're difficult to talk about. Each year, about 3 million teenagers contract sexually transmitted diseases that can harm them or kill them or prevent them from ever becoming parents. In my budget, I propose a grassroots campaign to help inform families about these medical risks. We will double Federal funding for abstinence programs, so schools can teach this fact of life: Abstinence for young people is the only certain way to avoid sexually transmitted diseases.

Decisions children now make can affect their health and character for the rest of their lives. All of us, parents and schools and government, must work together to counter the negative influence of the culture and to send the right messages to our children.

A strong America must also value the institution of marriage. I believe we should respect individuals as we take a principled stand for one of the most fundamental, enduring institutions of our civilization. Congress has already taken a stand on this issue by passing the Defense of Marriage Act, signed in 1996 by President Clinton. That statute protects marriage under Federal law as a union of a man and a woman and declares that one State may not redefine marriage for other States.

Activist judges, however, have begun redefining marriage by court order, without regard for the will of the people and their elected representatives. On an issue of such great consequence, the people's voice must be heard. If judges insist on forcing their arbitrary will upon the people, the only alternative left to the people would be the constitutional process. Our Nation must defend the sanctity of marriage.

The outcome of this debate is important, and so is the way we conduct it. The same moral tradition that defines marriage also teaches that each individual has dignity and value in God's sight.

It's also important to strengthen our communities by unleashing the compassion of America's religious institutions. Religious charities of every creed are doing some of the most vital work in our country: mentoring children, feeding the hungry, taking the hand of the lonely. Yet Government has often denied social service grants and contracts to these groups, just because they have a cross or a Star of David or a crescent on the wall.

By Executive order, I have opened billions of dollars in grant money to competition that includes faith-based charities. Tonight I ask you to codify this into law, so people of faith can know that the law will never discriminate against them again.

In the past, we've worked together to bring mentors to children of prisoners and provide treatment for the addicted and help for the homeless. Tonight I ask you to consider another group of Americans in need of help. This year, some 600,000 inmates will be released from prison back into society. We know from long experience that if they can't find work or a home or help, they are much more likely to commit crime and return to prison. So tonight I propose a 4-year, $300 million prisoner reentry initiative to expand job training and placement services, to provide transitional housing, and to help newly released prisoners get mentoring, including from faith-based groups. America is the land of second chance, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.

For all Americans, the last 3 years have brought tests we did not ask for and achievements shared by all. By our actions, we have shown what kind of nation we are. In grief, we have found the grace to go on. In challenge, we rediscovered the courage and daring of a free people. In victory, we have shown the noble aims and good heart of America. And having come this far, we sense that we live in a time set apart.

I've been witness to the character of the people of America, who have shown calm in times of danger, compassion for one another, and toughness for the long haul. All of us have been partners in a great enterprise. And even some of the youngest understand that we are living in historic times. Last month a girl in Lincoln, Rhode Island, sent me a letter. It began, "Dear George W. Bush. If there's anything you know I, Ashley Pearson, age 10, can do to help anyone, please send me a letter and tell me what I can do to save our country." She added this P.S.: "If you can send a letter to the troops, please put, 'Ashley Pearson believes in you.' "

Tonight, Ashley, your message to our troops has just been conveyed. And yes, you have some duties yourself: Study hard in school; listen to your mom or dad; help someone in need; and when you and your friends see a man or woman in uniform, say, "Thank you." And Ashley, while you do your part, all of us here in this great Chamber will do our best to keep you and the rest of America safe and free.

My fellow citizens, we now move forward with confidence and faith. Our Nation is strong and steadfast. The cause we serve is right, because it is the cause of all mankind. The momentum of freedom in our world is unmistakable, and it is not carried forward by our power alone. We can trust in that greater power who guides the unfolding of the years. And in all that is to come, we can know that His purposes are just and true.

May God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali), Al Qaida's chief operational planner in Southeast Asia; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in a Discussion at Owens Community College in Perrysburg Township, Ohio

January 21, 2004

The President. Thank you, Dr. Adams. Well done. [*Laughter*] You read it just like I wrote it. [*Laughter*] I appreciate your invitation. Thank you for your leadership. I want to thank you all for coming. I particularly want to thank the panelists who are here. We're about to have a discussion about how a community college can change people's lives in a positive way, how we can use our community college system to help people who want to work gain the skills necessary to find jobs in what is a changing economy.

Before we get there, I do want to say a few comments, now that you're stuck here. [*Laughter*] First, it's great to be in Toledo, the home of the Mud Hens. I've always been

intrigued by the nickname, the "Mud Hens." [*Laughter*]

I'm glad to be in the presence of two Members of the United States Senate who actually hitched a ride on Air Force One. They endured a rather long speech last night, then got on the airplane and endured another speech. [*Laughter*] And that would be Senator George Voinovich and Senator Mike DeWine. I want to thank you for coming. There they are, yes.

I was telling—talking to George about what we were going to do here today. He said, "You know, when I was a Governor, I recognized the role of community colleges in job training." And I want to give George credit where credit is due. He was a pioneer in making sure that the curriculum of the community college system in Ohio was relevant to the needs of employers and potential employees. What we're really here to talk about is something that George Voinovich started, and I'm grateful.

That tradition is being carried on by your current Governor, Governor Bob Taft. I'm honored you're here, Governor. Thank you for coming. I appreciate Paul Gillmor; Congressman Gillmor is with us today. Congressman, thank you for coming. He was quick to point out that Owens is in his district. [*Laughter*] I'm quick to point out, you better take care of Owens. It's doing a fine job, Congressman. I appreciate you. And you are—and you are.

We've got a lot of local officials here, mayors, and—I appreciate you coming. We've got members of the school board who are here, trustees of this important college, and I want to thank you all for being here.

Last night I had the opportunity to address the Nation. I talked about a lot of subjects that were on my mind. One of them, of course, is that we still fight the war on terror. I just want to assure you that I understand, my most important obligation as your President is to keep this country secure and strong. And there are a lot of really good people working on your behalf, whether it be people in the Homeland Security Department—and thank you for training people for the Homeland Security Department—local police, local firefighters, or the brave men and women who wear our uniform, all of whom understand the solemn obligation to protect the people. We will never forget the lessons of September the 11th. We will stay on the offensive. We will win the war on terror and make sure that America is secure and free.

I see local officers here. It is very important that we provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to fight and win this war. I called for the renewal of the Patriot Act. I want to tell you why. It is important that we be able to share information at the Federal level. It's important we have the authority to be able to seize assets. These tools in the Patriot Act, most of the tools, we have been using for years against embezzlers or criminals. We're at war. It seems like to me it is logical that we apply tools that we've used to catch embezzlers to be able to catch terrorists. The Congress needs to renew the Patriot Act so we can win the war on terror and secure the homeland.

I also reminded the people that we've been through a lot in this country, particularly when it comes to the economy. Just a brief recap: We've been through a recession. That means three quarters of negative growth, which means people get laid off their jobs. We had a terrorist attack which affected the psychology of the country. It really did. It changed foreign policy, by the way. When you see a gathering threat, we can no longer ignore it and hope it goes away. It also said to America that we are—we can be hurt by an enemy that hates us. And it affected us. It really did.

We had corporate scandals. I oftentimes talk about the need to usher in a period of personal responsibility. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And we passed laws to make that abundantly clear.

And then, we marched to war. We took gathering threats seriously, and we dealt with them. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein and the Taliban. But all that—the march to war affected our psychology and confidence. It is hard to be optimistic about the future when you turn on your TV screens and say, "America is marching to war." War is not positive. War is—it sends the signal that there will be uncertainty. We're not

marching to peace. But we overcome a lot, and it's important for our citizens to remember that.

We overcame it, in my judgment, because we properly stimulated the economy by letting people keep their money. And now we're growing. Nationwide, this economy is strong: Housing up; inflation's low; interest rates are low. We had good exports the last quarter. New jobs are being created—I mean, last month on the exports. Things are happening.

I fully recognize, in Ohio there are still troubled times. The manufacturing here is sluggish at best, and therefore, people are looking for work. People who could rely upon a steady job in the manufacturing sector are hoping to be able to realize their hopes by finding work elsewhere.

There are some things we can do to make sure the Ohio manufacturing sector is strong. One is to make sure our trading partners understand, we expect there to be free, but level—the playing field needs to be level, that we expect countries like China to understand that trade imbalances doesn't mean—that says that the trade is not balanced and fair, that they've got to deal with their currency.

We also need an energy policy, by the way. If you rely upon manufacturing to have a vibrant job base, you've got to have an energy policy. Manufacturers need to have a reliable source of energy. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. We got public policy that is—that makes it difficult for Ohio's manufacturers to say, "We got a reliable source of energy." We've run up the demand for natural gas. We haven't had a corresponding increase in natural gas. It's hard to keep people working when your energy bills are going out of sight. We need an energy policy. I called on Congress to pass one, and they need to get one to my desk.

One other issue that makes it hard for people to stay working in certain industries is that we got a problem with medical liability. There are junk and frivolous lawsuits which are running good docs out of business. Now, look, any doctor who is a bad doc deserves to be held to task. But you can't have a system where people just file lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit, fishing for a rich settlement, because what that's going to do is, it's going to run up the cost of health care and drive good docs out of business. And that affects the ability for employers to keep people working. Congress needs to pass medical liability reform now.

These are some of the ways to make sure the manufacturing activity of this State remains strong. But the truth of the matter is, there is job growth in other sectors, and therefore, we'd better have a system which is able to be flexible enough to help people who want to work find a job, to match willing worker with willing employer. And that's what we're here to talk about.

Very quickly, the first stage to make sure workers are trained is to make sure our public education system does its job. The No Child Left Behind Act is challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising standards. We're trusting local people to make the right decisions. But we expect every child—every child—not just a few but every child to learn the basics of reading and math. Like I said last night, I'm going to repeat here, the days of just quitting on kids early and shuffling them through our public schools is over.

The ability for these community colleges to do their job means we better have people coming out of high school who can read and write and add and subtract. The best place to start is early. And we're starting early now in America. We're testing to make sure we figure out who needs extra help. And the Federal Government is increasing Federal spending, particularly on Title I students, in dramatic fashion. I also think we need to spend additional money for kids in high school. See, there's a learning gap where the accountability systems are late in arriving in certain places, and therefore, some kids have been shuffled through.

Last night I didn't specify what I meant, but I'll tell you right now what I meant. I think we need to spend an additional $100 million for high school and intermediate reading programs. We want these kids at least reading when they're coming out of high school, and you've got to be honest about it. And these presidents of these community colleges will tell you, sometimes they're getting kids out of high school that can't read. And that's a shame. And that's

not right, and we can focus extra resources there.

We need people who are more steeped in math and sciences. And therefore, it's important for us to encourage scientists and mathematicians to teach part-time and to make sure our teachers are properly trained in the math and sciences so they can impart knowledge that is necessary for kids to have a bright future. We got extra teacher training money, about $120 million a year.

I think we need to have more advanced placement programs in low-income schools to encourage rigorous curriculum for all students. See, if you're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations, you believe every child can learn. And therefore, we ought to be raising that bar for all students. And so we've got money in the budget, $28 million to encourage advanced placement programs to go into neighborhoods that have not had the benefit of an advanced placement program. And then, to coincide that, I think we ought to have increased Pell Grants for students who qualify and take rigorous curriculum, and that would be Pell Grants of up to $1,000 additional money.

I'm telling you—what I'm telling you is we're focusing on people who can achieve the great promise of our country. We're not going to quit on anybody, and we're going to make sure the community college system does its job. As you know full well, particularly if you're a trustee of the community college, that most of the money is local money, but the Federal Government can help, particularly when it comes to job training.

The president talked about the job training initiative I talked about last night. It's $250 million of direct money to help on these programs which match workers with employers. There's no better place to do that than the community college system. The community college system is flexible. The community college system is local. The community college system accepts input.

And that's what we're here to talk about. It's very important for people who are listening to this conversation that if you're running a community college, I want you to pay attention to what Owens has done. And as importantly, if you're somebody out there who doesn't see a bright tomorrow, listen to the two students. They may look old to be students—[*laughter*]—but nobody's too old to be a student.

Let me—why don't we—you heard from Dr. Adams. I don't know if you want to elaborate beyond this, Dr. Adams. I thought your explanation about what your community college is doing was great. It should be clear to people when you hear the number of students being trained for work—18,000, I think you said—is the reason I'm here. You've got 18,000 people coming through here who are better skilled to meet the jobs being generated in this part of the world. And if you want to elaborate on that, you can. She also told me a lot about nursing, by the way. We've got a nursing—[*applause*]—yes, there you are. It's a nursing shortage?

Participant. Yes.

The President. Forty thousand students? Well, anyway.

[*At this point, the discussion continued.*]

The President. Yes, I appreciate the guy who is responsible for making sure the curriculum actually adjusts and doesn't stay stuck. What you've got to worry about, if you're in the local community, you've got to ask this question to a provost, "Are you flexible?" [*Laughter*] In other words, if somebody shows up and says, "We've got a demand for jobs," will the community college adjust?

It used to be, in the old days when they held Governors to account as to whether or not we were meeting workforce requirements, it didn't matter what job you trained somebody for. All that mattered is, you train them. So—I'm sure this didn't happen with Voinovich; it might have happened with me—you go out and train 1,000 hairdressers for 50 jobs. But everybody said, "You're doing a fine job. You're training a lot of people."

The key is to train people for the work which actually exists. No better place to do that than in a community college; that's why we're spending $250 million to encourage that.

Paul Unger is with us. He's the provost—fancy word for the guy responsible for making sure it works. [*Laughter*] And he is.

[*Paul Unger, provost, Owens Community College, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, I hope everybody listened to what he just said. He said, "We take input." Sometimes institutions of higher education don't take input and miss opportunity. Owens takes input because they're willing to listen to the people on the frontlines of hiring, making the hiring decisions, for which I'm grateful.

Jim Gilmore is the coordinator here of the Skilled Trades Technology and Integrated Systems Technology Programs. Why don't you tell us what that means, what a coordinator does, and—just tell me what you do.

Mr. Gilmore. Coordinator is a fancy word for the guy who does a lot and——

The President. And gets no credit.

Mr. Gilmore. And gets no credit. [*Laughter*]

[*The discussion continued.*]

Mr. Gilmore. The other part of my position is to work with local area business and industry and find out what those needs are, what are they looking for, and if they have an opening, to put those students with those companies and match them up.

The President. How do you do that? In other words, if some person out there says, "I need to hire five new people," how does that person get in touch with you? How does——

Mr. Gilmore. What are you looking for, Mr. President? [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm trying to think of a cute answer. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Gilmore. The quiet ones are dangerous. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's right. I don't need a new wife, fortunately. [*Laughter*] I married really well. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Gilmore. In my position, companies will usually seek us out and ask us specifically, "We are looking for people with these skills." For example, a company might say, "We're looking for maintenance people, and we need our maintenance people to have skills in hydraulics, pneumatics, electronics, PLCs." And they might come to me and say, "Do you have somebody in mind or can you put me in touch with a placement service, with anybody that would have an idea of what Owens and Owens students have to offer?" And most typically, we'll put them in touch with our placement service, the Wood County's placement service, or Lucas County or whatever county that that company happens to reside in. And we match those people up to find them the right job. So it's a two-way street.

The President. Good job. Here's the thing, that—he talks about one-stop; let me tell you what that means. That means there's one place at the local level where a—somebody who is looking for work can go to try to find a job. That's what that means. And there's a lot of opportunities around the country at one-stops. It's one of the interesting innovations which Government put in place in the past decade to make sure that people are able to find a job. They can find help there. They can find counseling services.

Better to explain the one-stop than me is Ruth Larabee. She is the director of the Wood County Department of Jobs and Family Services. Would you please tell everybody what a one-stop does, what your day is like, what—here in the community, are people looking for workers? What do you see and what do you hear?

[*Ruth Larabee, director, Wood County Department of Jobs and Family Services, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thanks, I appreciate you sharing that with us. You heard me talk about statistics, and they're good. There's no doubt things are getting better, and that's positive. There's no doubt the economy is changing because of technology, and that's interesting. It makes for great, interesting opportunities.

But one of the things we've got to recognize in our society, as technology races through the economy, some people could conceivably be—are being left behind because of the skill sets, and that we welcome innovation, productivity increases. These are all positive for labor stability, higher wages, better opportunity. But this country of ours must also recognize that the workforce needs to be constantly trained to stay up with the technological advances.

And two people to best talk about that are with us today—students, people who are not satisfied with falling behind, people who have

found that there's opportunity and are willing to seize it.

I was teasing Becky, publicly, of course, here. [*Laughter*] But I did so with pride in my voice, I want you to know, because she is—has struggled. And here she sits with a bright future. And so I want you to share your story with us, Becky. She's a good soul who has got—and I told Becky coming in here today, I said, "There's people just like you, Becky, who are probably watching, or may be watching, who just got to know that because of what you have done here at Owens, they've got a shot, too. They've got an opportunity to improve themselves." So let her go.

[*Rebecca Albritton, student, Owens Community College, made brief remarks.*]

The President. This good soul says, "I've got a skill set; I need to upgrade it," that "The world is changing; I need to change with it." Community colleges need to change, but people also have got to make the conscious decision to seize opportunity, to see a brighter future. That's what I love about Becky's story. She could have just said, "Well, I quit." But she didn't. She found opportunity.

Some of the people may be out there wondering whether or not this is affordable, whether or not there is any help. And why don't you tell us, Becky, what you found.

Ms. Albritton. I found, when I went out to the one-stop, that tuition was available, and they pay for your tuition; they pay for your books. The only thing they don't pay for is your time. That's honest.

The President. That's good. [*Laughter*] Let me ask you this question. Is it worth it?

Ms. Albritton. Very much so, very much so.

The President. There you go.

The other living example of what is possible when people make up their mind to improve themselves and seek opportunity, and the local community provides those opportunities, is Mike. Mike Potter is with us. He's the pretty one down there on the end. [*Laughter*] I asked Mike to share his story with you because I think you'll find it interesting. I think anybody who wonders whether or not they can learn a new skill should listen to what Mike has to say. Mike, why don't you let her go.

[*Mike Potter, maintenance technician, Oracle Packaging, made brief remarks.*]

The President. How long did it take? I mean, you're laid off; you come here. How long did it take you to get prepared, to get—to be ready for the new kind of job, the higher paying job? Because, frankly, he was more productive as a worker. He had the skills necessary to fit into the changing economy. How long were you here for?

Mr. Potter. The program—actually it's a self-based program. It's an excellent program for anybody that doesn't have much trouble with—well, that has trouble with bookwork, I'm sorry. It's hands-on, self paced, and that's what was a great part. It actually took me about, probably about maybe 3 or 4 months to finish the program.

The President. So it's not a lifetime?

Mr. Potter. No, no, not at all.

The President. You're able to come in, move quickly, get some skills, and all of a sudden, somebody says, "I love his attitude. He's a hard worker, and he's got the skill sets necessary to fit into this new workforce." That's what people need to know.

Mr. Potter. Everything is changing. People don't just want to see a person with just one skill anymore. They want several skills, and that's what the IST program offers.

The President. That's good. Thanks for sharing. You did a great job.

Our two students here are serving as mentors, in a way, aren't they? They're saying what is possible. And I want to thank you all for sharing your story. I'm sure it was a nerve-wracking experience—[*laughter*]—thinking about coming here. [*Laughter*] Look at all those cameras.

We've got another mentor with us today. Bruce Vanisacker is with us. He came out to the airport to meet me. It's an interesting idea he's doing. He has started what's called First Robotics, that teaches and inspires young people to be interested in the sciences, and that's important. Science and engineering and mathematics are all essential as we head into the 21st century.

I appreciate Bruce coming because it gives me a chance to remind people here and in

Toledo and around the State of Ohio and the country that the true strength of the country lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens, that we're a mighty military country—we'll stay that way, in order to keep the peace—that we've got wealth, compared to other countries, and that's good. But the true strength can be found in neighborhoods where people have decided to mentor a child, to teach a person to read or write, to love the homeless, to help feed the hungry.

Bruce is with us. Bruce, thank you for coming. You might stand up right quick. He happens to be interested in science and robotics, but really what he's doing, when you think about it, is mentoring a child.

This country is prosperous. We're going to be more prosperous, but we don't want anybody left behind. No child should be left behind in the education system, no worker left behind because we haven't created a flexible system in order to get skills, nobody who needs love left behind. Government can't make people love one another, but we darn sure can encourage people who love to reach out to a neighbor in need. America can change for the better one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, and I call upon you to be a part of the army of compassion, to help make this community and this State and our country one of hope for every single citizen who lives here.

It's such an honor to be here today. I thank our panelists for what I have found to be an interesting discussion. I hope you have as well, and thank you all for coming.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The President also referred to Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103–382), which amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89–10).

Remarks in a Discussion at Mesa Community College in Phoenix, Arizona

January 21, 2004

The President. Well, I appreciate you having me here. You've got an interesting accent—[*laughter*]—thought for a minute you were from Texas. [*Laughter*] Then he told me he was from Australia. And we really appreciate our friends from Australia.

First, I want to thank you for letting me come by. This is going to be an interesting dialog to talk about how to make sure our community college systems—not only here in Arizona but around the country—meet the needs of the modern workforce. Let me put it another way—make sure that people get the skills necessary to find work. And that's what we're really here to talk about.

The reason why we're here at Mesa is because you're doing a great job. I'm sure we'll hear some of that soon. Before we do, though, I want to recognize Members of the United States Congress who are here. I appreciate so very much them coming. That would be J.D. Hayworth and Trent Franks and Jeff Flake. I don't know if you guys were there last night—this is the ultimate loyalty, when they hear a long speech last night, then they come and get to hear another speech, back to back. But thank you all for being here. I appreciate your service to our country and your State.

I know there's elected officials here. I know there are members of the community college board of trustees. I met the chairman, by the way, who did a fine job of lobbying on behalf of the funding for the community college system—[*laughter*]—in this vital part of our country.

Let me—just a couple of comments, and then we'll start the dialog. First, we're still at war. And we're going to win the war, because there's a lot of really brave, capable, courageous Americans who are willing to sacrifice for liberty and freedom.

I was so touched, when I went to Baghdad or when I met our troops around our country, to realize there are people in our country who are serving something greater than themself. I think that's such a wonderful part of our Nation and our culture. And you just got to know, our Government will do everything we can to keep us safe—keep us safe by staying on the offensive, by changing parts of the world that had embraced tyranny. We believe strongly in America that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every person who lives in the world, every man and woman.

And America will continue to have a forward strategy of freedom to make the world more peaceful.

And it's hard work. I know it is. But in my judgment, it's essential work. It's essential work so that our children can grow up in a peaceful and free society. It's essential work so others' children can grow up in a peaceful and free world as well.

At home, we got a lot of good people working in homeland security. I met the Governor at the airport today. It rained. [*Laughter*] I said, "Do you want to take credit for the rain, or do you want me to take credit for the rain?" [*Laughter*] But she's working hard, and the coordination between the Federal and State and local authorities is good. We're doing everything we can to protect us.

The other thing that's happening is, is that our economy is beginning to grow. And that's important. There's no need to talk about job training if we're not creating new jobs. And that's what we're here to discuss.

I just want to remind everybody right quick what we have been through, just to show you how strong America is and how great the American people are. We've been through a recession. We went—we were attacked. And make no mistake about it, the attack hurt. The attack hurt because it made it abundantly clear that this Nation is no longer protected by oceans and that we've got to get on the offensive if we're interested in keeping us peace and safe. We had some corporate scandals. That hurt us. It hurt us when citizens who should know better didn't tell the truth to their employees and their shareholders. They're now being held to account, by the way, because of good laws we passed. Then we marched to war. When you're marching to war to make our country more secure and the world more free, it is not conducive to capital investment. That's a negative thought. When you turn on your TV screens for a lot of last year, it said "March To War." And that didn't instill a lot of confidence in the people, because there's a lot of uncertainty when "a march to war." We're now marching to peace, and we're changing the world in a better way.

And the economy is growing, and jobs are getting better. There will be honest disagreement about what I'm about to tell you, but I strongly believe that the tax relief we passed is helping this economy grow and that people have more money in their pocket. So there are jobs.

Now, I'm going to talk about—we'll talk about the new jobs of the 21st century. There are some old jobs, however, that are being filled by people from other countries. Let's be very frank about what I'm about to tell you. There are some jobs that employers are having trouble filling because Americans don't want to do them. And therefore, there are people from foreign countries coming to do the jobs.

There's a spirit of parenthood in everybody's heart, if you happen to be a mom or a dad. There's a deep desire for people to put food on the table to fulfill their obligations. And that's what's happening a lot when people come from countries like Mexico to work. They're coming to make a living, and they're filling jobs that, frankly, others won't do. It seems like to me that we ought to have a policy that's open and honest about this phenomena. It's a policy that, in my judgment, should say, where there's a willing worker and a willing employer, those two ought to be matched up together in a legal way, so long as the employer can't find an American to do the job.

What I'm talking about is a temporary-worker program that recognizes the reality of our economy. It's a temporary-worker program that also says clearly, we're a land of rule of law, that having people in the shadows of our economy is not really the American way, is it? So what I want to do is to say, let's have it all legal, in this sense: You can come to our country for a period of time so long as there's a job available for you.

Now, that doesn't mean there's automatic citizenship; quite the contrary. I strongly oppose what they call "amnesty" because all amnesty would do is invite more illegal immigration. All amnesty would do would say to those who are waiting in line in a legal way to become a citizen that legality—being legal doesn't matter in America. It does matter. So what I wanted Congress to consider for certain kinds of jobs is to put out a temporary-worker card; to get rid of all this business about people forging documents that put employers at risk; that say, for the period

of time you're here, you can go home and take money back without fear of being arrested. It's a humane way to approach citizens of the world. Imagine being a worker here, and you get abused, and you don't dare call the abuser to account because you might get sent home and you can't do your job of making money for your family. So that's what I call on Congress to do.

It also is going to help our Border Patrol. It's essential for the security of this country that we have a legal system so we don't have this terrible problem of "coyotes" smuggling these people across the hot Arizona or Texas deserts, making money off the system that has now developed in America. I think we ought to let the sunshine in, have a legal system, recognize realities.

At the same time in our country we have a debate over those kind of jobs, we've always got to remember to make sure that Americans can find work too, of course. One of the interesting phenomena is the technological changes that are charging through our economy. And this Government—[*inaudible*]—for us to understand that as technologies change, oftentimes people can be left behind. And we've got to address it straight on.

And one of the greatest places to address that phenomena is at the community college system. And the reason why it's the community college system, it's flexible in its curriculum. The old days of workforce training are now changing. It used to be they said, "Look, just go train people," so States would go out and train 1,000 beauticians for 50 jobs. And there would be 950 beauticians without work. But they'd say, "Oh, we punched our ticket. We actually trained people."

Now we've got a new attitude in America. We're going to train people for the jobs that actually exist, and therefore requires a system that is flexible, a system willing to take input from the employers, a system that is willing to change curriculum, if need be, to meet the demands of local—of the local workplace.

So last night in my speech, I talked about spending additional money to focus directly on these programs, these collaborative programs at the community college level, that takes the input from business, takes the desire of workers, matches them so people can find good work. And so Congress needs to pass $250-million job training money to go specifically to community colleges to fund the kind of programs we're going to talk about here today.

I've been talking too much over the last 24 hours, so I want Martin to tell us how this collaborative effort got going. Now, one of the things that's interesting, I told our panelists, is that not only are you speaking to the folks here, but there's a lot of people listening. I hope community college systems pay attention to what they're about to hear, pay attention to what they're—what's taking place here in Arizona. It's a interesting idea. And it's one, I might add, that the Department of Labor has helped fund to get started.

So Martin, why don't you educate the people?

[*At this point, Martin Bean, chief operating officer, New Horizons Computer Learning Centers, and chair, CompTIA Policy Committee, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Obviously, the IT industry is strong here in Arizona.

Mr. Bean. Absolutely.

The President. Well—and tell us how this got started.

Mr. Bean. How we got started?

The President. Yes. Did you call everybody in the room and said, "All right, let's get after it?" Somebody needs workers, obviously. And so you came up with an interesting idea.

Mr. Bean. It really got started because educators got frustrated that they had to reinvent the wheel in every community college, and employers got frustrated that there was no clear way for them to be able to mentor and coach employees. And as the industry's association, CompTIA said, "Fine, we'll work with the Department of Labor, and instead of building programs for where there aren't any jobs, we'll build a set of standards for people to educate to employers' needs to get work."

The President. A strategy.

Mr. Bean. There we go. And now we're executing.

The President. Now you're implementing.

Mr. Bean. Exactly.

The President. Well, why don't we hear—let's talk to some of the implementers. Larry is the president of Mesa Community College, Larry Christiansen. Thank you for your hospitality.

Dr. Christiansen. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I appreciate your staff for putting up with this giant entourage of mine. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Christiansen. It's been a fun few days.

The President. I bet it has, yes. [*Laughter*]

[*Dr. Christiansen made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good. How many people come to this particular campus?

Dr. Christiansen. Just at our little place here, at Mesa Community College, we have 27,000 students.

The President. Right.

Dr. Christiansen. We have about 3,000 that participate in our Business and Industry Center.

The President. And the Business and Industry Center's sole purpose is to train people for jobs?

Dr. Christiansen. That's correct.

The President. And you've got 3,000 now?

Dr. Christiansen. Right. That is in addition to, as all of our colleges, we have other occupational programs that focus on job training as well. But much of what our Business and Industry Center does is partnering with industry.

The President. Right. Here we're talking about IT. I went to a community college in North Carolina. There we talked about health care. And the only reason I bring that up is that there are several fields where there's really fast-growing opportunities. It just requires a certain skill. You just can't walk into the job unless you're able to be educated into the ways of that particular industry. And in our country, it's—a changing economy provides interesting opportunities. And Mary is responsible for making sure it all works, aren't you?

Dr. Mary I. Vanis. We hope so.

The President. Yes. Tell us your job.

[*Dr. Vanis, director, Center for Workforce Development, Maricopa Community Colleges, made brief remarks.*]

The President. It's the ultimate community outreach.

Dr. Vanis. It's a great community outreach.

The President. It works because it's administered at the State and local level. It's really good public policy.

Dr. Vanis. It's a great policy.

The President. I presume some of our students—it's interesting to call you a student, isn't it? [*Laughter*] You never thought you would be a student, did you, at this stage of your life, which sets a classic example for others to understand that if times get tough and if you've got the desire, somebody will want to help you. And in Arizona, you get help right here. Good job.

You want to start? Stacey is with us, Stacey Leedom. She is a student. Stacey, why don't you tell us your story? I told Stacey and Bill and Bob that you just don't know, somebody might be watching our discussion here, wondering whether or not he or she can have a bright future. And to the extent that you can help shed light on where you've been and where you're going, it would awfully helpful.

[*Ms. Leedom made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Ms. Leedom. I was lucky enough to get hired on by a company called Cable One, contracting first through a temporary service. But they are actually owned by the Washington Post. [*Laughter*]

The President. Can you change the editorial page? [*Laughter*]

Ms. Leedom. I'll ask. [*Laughter*]

The President. Good luck. I hope you rise quickly in the ranks. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Leedom. Sorry about that.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Leedom. Again, it helps me with a daughter. I want her to go to college. I don't want her to make mistakes I made of not going at a young age and having a full future and a full retirement plan and everything. I now have insurance for her. I have insurance for myself. It's a future. And I'm right now, at an entry level, where I was after 15

years of being a graphic artist, on income. And that is—in the end, who has to pay the bills? Mom has to pay the bills.

The President. That's a really—first of all, being a single mom is the toughest job in America. Being a single mom who needs more education and has the desire to do so is doubly tough. And yours is a wonderful story. It is a story that others need to listen to. If you're worried about your skill set, you're never too old to learn. As a matter of fact, we all learn in different ways, don't we? You've been able to take your desire to do your duty as a responsible citizen and convert it to a employable skill.

What's really interesting about what she said—I want people to hear this—when you hear about productivity increases and the changing economy, she just said by taking time to develop new skills, she makes more in her new job, in the new world, than she did after 15 years in her old job.

The changing economy can leave people behind if we're not wise. But the changing economy also is good news. It creates higher paying, higher quality jobs. And that's what's happening here in America. And that's why it's essential that these kind of programs that we're talking about provide willing souls with the skills necessary to take advantage of it. Fifteen years of work, her pay now is higher in one year—how long have you been at Capital One?

Ms. Leedom. I've actually not been there a year; I've been there about 6 months.

The President. I rest my case. I appreciate that. Good job.

Ms. Leedom. Thank you, sir.

The President. Bob Chapman.

[*Mr. Chapman, a Mesa Community College student, made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Mr. Chapman. And at the moment now, I plan on getting my degree this spring, and so I'm right now out looking for a job. I was able to use some of the resources at the——

The President. Yes, one-stop center.

Mr. Chapman. One-stop center. [*Laughter*] That's the easiest way. I was trying to say the formal name for it—at the one-stop center.

The President. It happens to me all the time. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chapman. Then I'm in good company. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, thank you.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. I think it's important for people who wonder whether or not they can afford to go back to community college, there's pots of money that will help—Pell grants in this case, trade adjustment money in your case. And I assume the financial burden has been eased quite significantly.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. You mentioned a word that I want to spring off here for a second—mentoring. I just want everybody to know that the true strength of the country is not our military power or the fact that we're the wealthiest nation in the world. The true strength of the country is the fact that we've got people with really good hearts. That's the strength of America; it's the decency and honor of our people. Obviously, what you just said is part of what I'm talking about, mentoring to help people.

Hilary Juel is with us today. Hilary, I'm sorry to embarrass you. You shouldn't have come out to see me at Air Force One if you didn't want me to introduce you. [*Laughter*] She is a—she's with Make a Difference service group here in Phoenix. Their job is to match loving hearts with broken hearts, is the best way to describe it; is to help people who heard the call to love a neighbor to just do that; is to help save this community and ultimately our country, one soul at a time.

I want to thank you for being a soldier in the army of compassion. I want to urge people in this community to gather up the spirit of the Hilarys or what you've heard here today, to make a difference in somebody's lives. And it doesn't take much to do so, by the way. If you teach a child to read, you're helping America. If you go to a shut-in's house and just tell him you love him on a regular basis, you're making a difference. No, the strength of this country is the fact that we've got citizens willing to serve something greater than themself.

I think the community college system of America is one of our great strengths. I hope that people who have listened here can see that in the living proof of three citizens who, because of their own will and their own desire, took advantage of the opportunity and are now working or soon-to-be working. [*Laughter*] Well, two working and one filling out a resume. [*Laughter*]

But I appreciate you all sharing your stories with us. It's important to know that—for people to know that as this economy changes, there's opportunity. You've just got to seize it, just like you three have done. I want to thank you for your—for the example you've set. I want to thank the folks here for providing a great service to our Nation.

And may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:06 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Janet Napolitano of New Mexico; and Bill Moses, student, Mesa Community College.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Additional Protocol Amending the Bulgaria-U.S. Treaty Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment

January 21, 2004

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Additional Protocol Between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria amending the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Republic of Bulgaria Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment of September 23, 1992, signed at Brussels on September 22, 2003. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to this Additional Protocol.

My Administration has already forwarded to the Senate a similar Additional Protocol for Romania and expects to forward to the Senate shortly Additional Protocols for the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the Slovak Republic. Each of these Additional Protocols is the result of an understanding the United States reached with the European Commission and six countries that will join the European Union (EU) on May 1, 2004 (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the Slovak Republic), as well as with Bulgaria and Romania, which are expected to join the EU in 2007.

The understanding is designed to preserve U.S. bilateral investment treaties (BITs) with each of these countries after their accession to the EU by establishing a framework acceptable to the European Commission for avoiding or remedying present and possible future incompatibilities between their BIT obligations and their future obligations of EU membership. It expresses the U.S. intent to amend the U.S. BITs, including the BIT with Bulgaria, in order to eliminate incompatibilities between certain BIT obligations and EU law. It also establishes a framework for addressing any future incompatibilities that may arise as European Union authority in the area of investment expands in the future, and endorses the principle of protecting existing U.S. investments from any future EU measures that may restrict foreign investment in the EU.

The United States has long championed the benefits of an open investment climate, both at home and abroad. It is the policy of the United States to welcome market-driven foreign investment and to permit capital to flow freely to seek its highest return. This Additional Protocol preserves the U.S. BIT with Bulgaria, with which the United States has an expanding relationship, and the protections it affords U.S. investors even after Bulgaria joins the EU. Without it, the European Commission would likely require Bulgaria to terminate its U.S. BIT upon accession because of existing and possible future incompatibilities between our current BIT and EU law.

I recommend that the Senate consider this Additional Protocol as soon as possible, and give its advice and consent to ratification at an early date.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 21, 2004.

Telephone Remarks to the March for Life

January 22, 2004

The President. Well, thank you very much, Nellie. I appreciate your kind introduction, and thank you for including me in this celebration of life. I'm calling you today from Roswell, New Mexico. And it sounds like you've got some people who know where Roswell is here in the audience.

I know that good folks have gathered there on The Mall from every corner of America to take part in the 31st March for Life. And I want you to pass on my best to each one of them in person, please, and tell them how much I appreciate their devotion to such a noble cause.

You believe, as I do, that every person, however frail or vulnerable, is a blessing. Each of us has a special dignity, a place and purpose in this world. And in the Declaration of Independence, our Founders stated this self-evident truth: The right to life does not come from government; it comes from the Creator of life.

During the past 3 years, we've made real progress toward building a culture of life in America. As President, I've signed the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. I have signed legislation supporting maternity group homes. Working with the Congress, we have refused to spend taxpayers' money on international programs that promote abortion overseas. We're opposed to the destruction of embryos for stem cell research. And last November, it was my honor to sign into law a ban on the brutal procedure of partial-birth abortion.

Nellie, I want you to know that our administration is vigorously defending this law against those who would seek to overturn it in the courts. I also want you to know, without your hard work and dedication to the cause of life, these achievements would not have been possible.

But we all know there is still more to do. Earlier this week, I proposed that we double Federal funding for abstinence education programs. We will continue to support crisis pregnancy centers, adoption, parental notification laws, and the vital work of faith-based groups.

I strongly support the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which the House Judiciary Committee approved yesterday. And now the entire Congress should act on this bill so I can sign it into law.

We'll also work with Congress to pass without delay a comprehensive and effective ban on human cloning. We can push the limits of medical science while maintaining the highest of ethical standards. Human life is a creation, not a commodity, and should not be used as research material for reckless experiments.

Above all, we must continue, with civility and respect, to remind our fellow citizens that all life is sacred and worthy of protection. I know, as you return to your communities, you will redouble your efforts to change hearts and minds one person at a time. And this is the way we will build a lasting culture of life, a compassionate society in which every child is born into a loving family and protected by law.

Ms. Gray. We pledge that to you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Nellie. I appreciate so very much the opportunity to speak to you and the assembled crowd. May God bless you all, and may He continue to bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. from Roswell, NM, to march participants on the National Mall in Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Nellie J. Gray, president, March for Life Education and Defense Fund.

Remarks in Roswell, New Mexico

January 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

Audience member. We love you, President Bush!

The President. Thank you. It's nice to be back in New Mexico. I understand you had reports this morning of an unfamiliar aircraft. [*Laughter*] No worry, it was just me. [*Laughter*] It's good to be back here. The last time I came to Roswell, I wasn't on Air Force One. I was headed to Ruidoso from Midland. [*Laughter*] Roswell was what we call a watering stop. [*Laughter*] You've got great people

in this part of the State. I'm proud to be in this wonderful town. Thank you for inviting me.

I appreciate you showing up to hear me talk. If you listened to the State of the Union, I appreciate that. And I can assure you, it's not—I can assure you, I'm not going to be quite as windy. But I do have some things I want to share with you today. This Nation is called to great responsibilities, and we're meeting them all. The state of this Union is strong, and it is confident.

I'm proud to be here with the Corps of the New Mexico Military Institute, the West Point of the West. I appreciate the values instilled at this fine institution, of discipline and service and honor. I know many folks who have come to this fine place, some of them from Midland, Texas. I happen to have hired one, an alumnus of this school, for my Cabinet, Mr. Tony Principi, who is representing America's veterans so capably as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

I want to thank the law enforcement and first-responders who are here with us. Thank you for wearing the uniform that says clearly you're willing to dedicate your lives to make your community a safer place. Thank you for being on the frontline of securing our homeland. I appreciate your service.

I appreciate Lt. Gen. Robert Beckel for his greeting me here today. He was from the first graduating class of NMMI in 1959. He doesn't look that old. [*Laughter*] But he's had a distinguished service for our country. General, I appreciate what you're doing. Thank you for leading this fine institution.

I'm so proud to be up here with Pete Domenici. What a class act he is. He's an honorable man, an honorable man who cares deeply about New Mexico and all its citizens. He cares deeply about our country. He's a strong leader. He sets the pace in the United States Senate. He's taken the lead on a vital piece of legislation, the energy bill. This country needs an energy bill. We need an energy bill that makes sure our electricity system works well. We need an energy bill that encourages technologies that advance conservation. We need an energy bill that makes this country less dependent on foreign sources of energy. The Senator worked hard on this piece of legislation. I thought we had it at the end of last year, and then it got stuck. We're going to unstick it for the good of the country.

Pete, I appreciate your friendship. Just one piece of advice: Just remember, it's the birds that's supposed to suffer, not the hunter. [*Laughter*]

I'm honored to be traveling today with your Congressman, Steve Pearce. He's what they call a freshman—that's first-year—but as a freshman, he's making a huge difference. Let me tell you something: You sent somebody up there from this part of the world who's effective and strong, who's not going to back down one inch from what he believes. And he's plenty capable, and he's making a difference. He worked hard on bills that matter to this part of the State, like the healthy forests bill—commonsense legislation. He worked to help on the defense appropriations bill for an amendment that says, "We can defend our country and, at the same time, conserve our resources in a wise way." No, he's an effective member of the United States Congress, and I'm proud to call him friend.

I'm proud to be traveling with Congresswoman Heather Wilson as well. She's over there, from Albuquerque. She's plenty capable. She's a distinguished Member of the United States Congress. She's a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and reminded me coming in that General Beckel was one of her instructors. General, you did a heck of a job in preparing this good woman for public service. I'm proud to be working with my friend Heather Wilson. Thank you for coming.

I'm honored that the mayor came to see me. Mayor Owen, I appreciate you coming. My only advice is, fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the business and community leaders who have come. I'm honored you all are here. You'll hear me talk about the strengths of our country. One of the strengths is that we're prosperous and getting more prosperous. That's a strength. One of the strengths is we've got a military that is second to none, and we aim to keep it that way. That's a strength as well. But that's not the strongest part of our country. The strongest part of the country is the people, because

of the hearts of the people of America. The compassion of America really defines the strength of America.

Today, when I landed at the airport, I met Amy Coppin. She is a senior at NMMI. She came to say hello because she is a mentor. She teaches children. She's taking time out of her busy life as a senior in college to make a difference in somebody's life. She's serving something greater than herself by loving a neighbor just like she would like to be loved herself. She is a soldier in the army of compassion.

When you hear me talk about the strength of America being the heart and soul of the people, what I'm talking about are the Amy Coppins of the world, and people in this crowd who are serving your community and your country by helping somebody who hurts.

One of the most profound initiatives I put out, I think, in order to help change America is for the Federal Government to welcome faith-based programs in delivery of essential services. I believe strongly that our Government should not discriminate against religious institutions. Quite the contrary: I believe we ought to welcome religious institutions into providing much-needed social services, because many of the problems of our society are problems of the heart. Many of the problems of society require a power greater than Government to help people realize the great potential of their lives.

Where's Amy? Amy didn't get a very good seat. Well—[*laughter*]—trust me; she's here. And I hope the cadets here follow her example, and as you go on to life, remember part of service to your country is to help somebody in need. And for those of you in this community who are a part of the army of compassion, thank you from the bottom of my heart. And for those of you who want to figure out how to contribute to our society, do so. Do so, and reach out a hand to somebody who might be hungry or homeless or lonely or hurt. The power of love in America is a power that will change our society, one soul at a time.

I hope you could tell last night and so far today that I'm incredibly optimistic about our Nation's future. And I've got reason to be. Not only do I know the character of the people, I'm beginning to see some results in some important areas that say optimism defines the future of this country.

Let me talk about the economy, for starters. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. I tell you I'm optimistic not only because of the numbers; I'm optimistic because I remember where we have come from. In March of 2000, the stock market, which is an indicator of—sometimes an indicator of economic times to come, started to decline. And then we had a recession. In '01, the first quarter of '01 was recession, and that's negative growth. And when the economy is not growing, it's hard for people to find a job. And then we kind of got going, got things going. The Congress passed the stimulus package—I want to thank the Senator and the Members of Congress for working on that—and things started getting better.

And then we got hit by the enemy. And make no mistake about it, the enemy attack affected America. It affected the way I think about foreign policy because we can no longer take gathering threats for granted. If we see a threat gathering overseas, the lesson of September the 11th says we must pay attention to it. We just can't—and if it gets so bad, we've got to do something about it. We cannot assume that oceans protect us anymore. It affected our psychology in America. It also affected the economy. And things were beginning to get okay, and all of a sudden, the attack came, and it hurt us. It hurt us bad. But we recovered because America's strong. We recovered because the American people are strong.

And just as we were beginning to get our feet on the ground again, we had a problem with some of our fellow citizens telling the truth. We had corporate scandals. We had CEOs that did not understand what it meant to be a responsible citizen. If you've got responsibilities, you've got obligations. In a society that tries to promote responsibilities, there are certain obligations. If you're a mom or a dad, you have the obligation to love your child with all your heart. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you have the responsibility to tell the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And if you don't, there has to be a consequence. We passed tough

laws, and now people are beginning to—you begin to read what it means to have consequences for not telling the truth. And that's the way it should be.

And then we marched to war. I made the tough decision of war, and I want to thank the Members of Congress who made the tough vote on war. It's not easy, but we acted because of the lessons of September the 11th. We acted based upon the facts. We acted to make the country more secure and the world more free. But when you're marching to war, it's tough on the economy. For this reason, the message, march to war, is not conducive for optimistic investment. Marching to war is negative, not positive. It's hard to be optimistic about the future when you look on your TV screen and it says, "America is marching to war." Now we're marching to peace and freedom.

So I've seen firsthand, and you've seen firsthand, what this Nation and our economy has been through. Those are plenty high hurdles to cross, but we're crossing them. One reason we're crossing them is because the Congress and this administration acted boldly. We weren't afraid to act. We knew what to do. And we passed economic stimulus packages, which is a fancy word for giving people their money back. We acted on this principle. It was a principled decision. It was based upon this principle, that when you have more money in your pocket, you'll spend, save, or invest. And when you do so, it drives the whole economy forward. The American people are driving the economy forward.

But I want to warn you, the stimulus package we passed is set to expire. Congress, in order to get the bill out, had to expire certain of the provisions, one of which was the child credit, which went up from—went up to $1,000, will decline to $700. If Congress doesn't act, you get a tax increase if you have a child.

The marriage penalty, we wanted the code to say: We want marriage to work. If we believe in marriage, we ought to say so in the Tax Code. And so we began to phase back the marriage penalty. If Congress doesn't act, the marriage penalty goes back up.

See, we understand that if you're interested in job creation, you've got to stimulate small business. Most new jobs are created by small-business owners in America. If you're a small-business owner, you know what I'm talking about. We stimulated small-business investment and, therefore, growth. If Congress doesn't act, small businesses will pay taxes.

We decreased the—well, we got rid of the death tax or put it on its way to extinction. We listened to New Mexico's farmers and ranchers and small-business owners that understand if you work all your life to build up an asset, you shouldn't be taxed twice. You shouldn't be taxed once as you're building up your asset and twice after you go on.

And then, in order to stimulate our economy, everybody got tax relief. You see, we didn't try to pick and choose who won and who lost. We said, "If there's going to be tax relief, let's be fair about it. If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief." If the Congress doesn't act, those taxes will go up. If the Congress doesn't act, the economy will suffer and people will make more taxes. Congress must make the tax relief they gave the people permanent.

Now, things are looking pretty good. Third-quarter growth last year was the highest in 20 years. And home construction is high. And homeownership levels are high, and that's really important. We want people owning things in America, don't we? We want people owning their own home. There's nothing like owning your own home or your own business to have a vital stake in the future of this country. Productivity is high. We've got the best workforce in the world. Manufacturing activity is strong. Exports are on the rise. Jobs are increasing. We're doing well—we're doing well.

But we've got a new economy we're dealing with. And one of the things I addressed yesterday in Arizona was how do you make sure that as technology changes, people's skills change with it so they can find work. See, my attitude is, if somebody is looking for a job and can't find one, that says, no matter what the numbers look like, we still have got an issue in America. We want people working. We want people to be able to put food on the table.

Before I talk about how to make sure American workers are trained, I do want to

bring up a subject that I had addressed in the State of the Union and before, that I think it's important for me to continue to clarify for the American people. We've got people doing jobs in America that Americans won't do, and that's helpful to our economy. It's helpful that there are some people that are willing to the do the work that others won't do. And I think we need to be honest about what's taking place in America. After all, we're a country of the rule of law, and we've got people breaking law. And the question is how best to bring what's happening to light in an honest and legal way.

My attitude is this—my attitude is: So long as there is a willing worker and an employer looking to hire somebody, we ought to have a system that allows for temporary work in America, in an honest, open way, in a way that talks to the values of our country. I oppose amnesty, loud and clear, because amnesty will encourage further illegal immigration. Amnesty rewards somebody for breaking the law. On the other hand, I do want to change a system that has ignored reality and allow willing employer to be matched with willing employee in an honest, open way.

We should not say to somebody who's working on a temporary-worker basis, "You get added—you get a special break when it comes to citizenship." You don't. You don't get a special break. But think about a system that has people working in the shadows of America. That's not the American way. That's not the way we do business in this country.

People are working who are trying to put food on the table for a family in Mexico. You've got to understand why they're here. They're motivated out of the deep love of their children and their wife. They're working just as hard as any other mom or dad do, for the same reason: They have an obligation and a responsibility. Those people need to be treated with respect. They need to be honored for their commitment to their families.

A temporary-worker plan that's honest and open will be good for this economy. It will also be good for the security of the country. We've got a lot of Border Patrol agents working hard to stop the flow of illegal immigration. I believe if we make the system open and honest, it will help stop the flow of illegal immigration. It will cut down on those "coyotes" that are putting people in the back of these trailers and driving them across incredibly hot desert. It will stop—it will make sure that those who are working to secure our borders will focus on the true threats to America, the illegal drugs or the contraband or the potential terrorists that could be coming across our borders.

No, this plan makes sense. I call upon the Congress to do what is good for our economy, what is good for our security, and what is compassionate, and pass the temporary-worker plan.

I also want to talk about how to make sure American workers don't get left behind. By the way, that starts with making sure our public schools work. It starts by making sure our public schools teach the basics.

I went up to Washington, and thanks to Pete's help and to Heather's help and to Steve's, now, help, we passed—[*laughter*]—we passed the No Child Left Behind Act. Let me just tell you the principles behind that as plainly as I possibly can. Every one of us needs to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. We need to raise that bar. If you believe every child has got the capacity to learn, you need to raise the bar. I don't care what the color of skin of that child may be; everybody can learn. And that's the principle of No Child Left Behind. We raise the standards. We expect everybody to learn.

We've increased Federal education spending, particularly for poor students, dramatically. But now, for the first time, we're asking the question, "Are we meeting expectations?" In return for increased Federal spending, the Federal Government is saying to local districts, "Show us whether or not the children are learning to read and write and add and subtract." I don't think that's too much. I don't think it's too much to increase budgets and in return say, "What are the results?" If you believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract, then you're not afraid to ask the question: Are they learning to read and write and add and subtract?

This administration trusts local people. We know you can chart the path to excellence. Your decision is on how to get there. All we

want to know is, are you doing what we expect you to do? Are you just meeting those obligations? In the bill we passed, there's extra help for students who fall behind. Listen, when you find out a third grader is not reading at grade level, get him or her extra help. We provide money to do that. We don't want any child in America left behind. The bill we passed is a great piece of legislation for America's children.

There's more we need to do. I talked about making sure that some of the high school students who are falling behind in reading and math get a little extra help. We've got to make sure there's—literacy is the law of the land. I talked about making sure that we expand advance placement programs in certain low-income schools in order to keep raising that bar, Pell grants for students that take rigorous curriculum, in order to encourage excellence. We want to make sure our community college system is flexible and viable to help people find jobs that exist.

Yesterday I was in Arizona, and I reminded people that in the old days of workforce training, they said, "Just go train people." So we'd go out and train 1,000 hairdressers, and there might be 50 slots. But you'd have 950 well-trained hairdressers with nothing to do. Now the workforce program says, "Let's match up employers with the community college system to train people for jobs that actually exist, for jobs that work." So we've got $250 million in the budget to go directly to community colleges, to invigorate the business communities and the community college, invigorate a joint strategy to help people find work.

Yesterday I sat with some folks on the stage. They were not student age, let's put it that way. They had worked for years. One woman worked for 15 years as a graphic designer. She's a single mom, by the way, and that's the toughest job in America. She was struggling to get ahead. She went back to the community college. She gained new skills, and in her first year in her new job, she's making more than she did after 15 years as a graphic designer.

Education—what I'm telling you is as the economy changes, there's tremendous opportunities for workers. We've just got to make sure the education system matches people with the skills necessary for the 21st century. And that's what this administration is going to do.

No, I'm optimistic about this country, because I understand the character of the people. And I'm optimistic because I know we're doing the right things when it comes to educating our children and workers. I'm optimistic about the economy. I'm also optimistic because we're going to win the war on terror. The greatest responsibility of the Federal Government, and my first responsibility as your President, is to defend and protect America.

I remember talking to the country after September the 11th and reminding people that this would be a different kind of war we faced. Sometimes you'd see action, and sometimes you wouldn't; that we'd be on a manhunt to find the terrorists who destroyed us. It would require a different kind of attitude about chasing these people down. I also knew that time would pass and people would take the comfortable position of saying the dangers had passed as well. That's just not reality. I wish it was reality, but it's not reality. My job as your President is to be realistic, be open-eyed, to understand the lessons of September the 11th, 2001, to understand there's terrorists who still plot against us. By our will, by our steadfast determination, by our courage, we will prevail in the war—first war of the 21st century.

In the United States, where the war begun, we will continue our vital work to protecting American people, by protecting our ports and borders and safeguarding infrastructure, preparing for the worst. I mentioned the first-responders. I can't tell you how pleased I am with the coordination now between the Federal Government, the State Government, and local governments for preparing our homeland. I'm going to submit a budget to Congress next month which will include spending of $30 billion for homeland security. That's—more than 30 billion—almost 3 times the amount that we were spending prior to September the 11th, 2001.

We understand our obligation in Washington. Our obligation is never to forget what happened on September the 11th. And our obligation is to support the homeland security people, those on the frontlines, to prepare for a potential threat.

I think it's very important for the country to understand the PATRIOT Act. See, that's an important part of fighting the war on terror. It's essential that the FBI and the CIA be able to share information if you want to whip the terrorists. See, it's a different kind of war. We're in a different era. We need to view law differently. We'll always protect our Constitution and safeguard individual rights, but our law enforcement, those who collect information and share information and expected to act on information, must be able to talk together.

Many of the tools in the PATRIOT Act have been used by law enforcement to chase down embezzlers and criminals. It is essential that those same tools be used in fighting against terrorists. We're in a different era. The PATRIOT Act is going to expire. The Congress needs to renew it for the sake of fighting the war on terror.

We'll protect the homeland. The best way to protect America, however, is to go on the offensive, stay on the offensive, and bring the terrorists to justice. I said in the speech the other night, two-thirds of known Al Qaida leaders have been captured or killed. We're making progress against them. The rest of them are hiding. They think they are, but they cannot escape the justice of America. We've got thousands of troops, thousands of brave soldiers. We're chasing them, one by one. We're on an international manhunt for those who would do harm to America or for anybody else who loves freedom. One by one, we'll bring them to justice. There is no hole deep enough to hide from America.

Not only are we after Al Qaida, we will continue to confront regimes that harbor or support terrorists, regimes that could supply them with weapons of mass destruction. The United States and our allies refuse to live under the shadow of this ultimate danger, refuse to be in a position where—to find ourselves in a position where terrorists could show up with weapons of mass murder. Our obligation is, defend our country. Our obligation is to be clear-eyed about the threats, and our obligation is to deal with them.

I laid down a doctrine early on that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." One of the lessons that people can pick up in this part of the world is, when you say something, you better mean it. That's particularly true in diplomacy. If you say something, you better mean it. I meant it, and the Taliban found out what we meant.

Afghanistan was the primary training base for Al Qaida. That's where the killers were learning the skills necessary to destroy innocent life. And we gave the Taliban a chance, and then they, of course, rejected—rejected the ultimatum I laid out. And so they no longer exist, thanks to the United States military and our friends and allies.

This barbaric regime is no more, and the people of Afghanistan are better off for it. You see, America loves freedom, but we understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world. It's the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. We love the fact that people in Afghanistan are now free. Remember, prior to our arrival, the Taliban wouldn't even let young girls go to school, and today, they do. They have written a constitution; the people of Afghanistan have written a constitution which is—guarantees free elections, freedom, full participation in government by women. Things are changing. Freedom is powerful. The people of Afghanistan are opening up health care centers and new businesses. Times are changing, because they have been liberated. America is safer because the Taliban doesn't exist. America is safer because Afghanistan is now free, and we stand strongly with the freedom-lovers in Afghanistan.

I made a tough decision, with the Congress' support, to remove Saddam Hussein from power, and we did. And the world is safer; America is more secure; and the world is more free because we got rid of Saddam Hussein. This brutal dictator attacked his neighbors, used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, plotted, was devious. He tortured Iraqis. We discovered mass graves of thousands of men and women and children. He had torture rooms for somebody who spoke out against him.

Saddam Hussein was found in a hole, hiding. Saddam Hussein, the once all-powerful tyrant who used his brutal dictatorship to intimidate and destroy lives, will no longer be

able to do so in Iraq. He sits in a prison cell, and the Iraqi people are free.

Fifty-five of the top officials, former officials in that regime—of the 55, 45 have been captured or killed. The other 10 have got to be nervous. [*Laughter*] They're out there. They're out there trying to shake our will. See, these people are murderers. They'll take innocent life to try to convince others that freedom isn't worth it. They will kill indiscriminately—they don't care who—to try to shake our confidence, to try to get in the heads of the American people. They don't understand America. America will never be intimated by thugs and assassins.

We're making progress. It's important for you to know that we're on the offensive in Iraq. As I said the other night, we're leading over 1,600 patrols a day, 180 raids every week. I mean, we're chasing them down. We're bringing them and foreign terrorists to justice there, so we don't have to face them in America. We're bringing them there because we understand freedom is vital for our future, freedom in Iraq is vital for our future.

I'm pleased with the progress we're making with the Iraqi citizens who are interested in running their own country. I met with the Acting President of the Governing Council, Adnan Pachachi. He sat next to Laura during the State of the Union. By the way—let me digress—I'm really glad I married a west Texas woman. She is a fabulous, fabulous—she's great. She's doing well, and she sends her love. [*Applause*] You Texans, calm down. [*Laughter*] You know the reputation you have here in eastern New Mexico. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, she was sitting next to Acting President Pachachi——

Audience member. We can't hear you.

The President. I can hear you. [*Laughter*]

And I met with him prior—in the Oval Office prior to the State of the Union. I was pleased with his vision, his understanding of freedom. The Oval Office is an interesting place to meet, particularly, people who are beginning to struggle with democracy and freedom because it's a reminder that the institutions, at least in this country, are always bigger than the people. Sometime we've got an all-right President; sometimes he's not all right. But the Presidency itself exists. It's a reminder of the power of institutions in a free society, that institutions in a free society are always bigger than the people, and he understood that.

And they're working hard. The Iraqi people are taking the brunt of most of these killings that are taking place. They also understand it's their responsibility to secure the country, so we've increased in large number the number of police and people who are willing to help secure the country. More Iraqis are now coming forward. They realize the killings that are taking place—sometimes maybe by foreign terrorists, obviously sometimes by former Ba'athist officials—will stop the march to freedom. They want to be free. You've got to understand, these people, like you and I, love freedom. It's in everybody's heart, and Pachachi understands that, and so does the Governing Council.

Freedom is happening in Iraq. And you've got to understand why it's important. Freedom in the heart of the Middle East, freedom and democracy in the place that has breeded resentment and terror, is in our national interests. A free Iraq will help change the world. A free Iraq will help change a neighborhood that needs to be changed. A free Iraq will make it easier for our children to grow up in a peaceful society.

People say, "What are you doing in the long term? We know what you're doing in the short term. We can hear you and see you; you're sending troops after the killers. What about the long-term plan against terrorists?" Free societies do not breed terrorism. Free societies are peaceful nations. What we're doing for the long term, we're promoting freedom.

The world is changing for the better. The world is getting more free and peaceful and less dangerous. Recently, Muammar Qadhafi made a wise decision to show and get rid of his weapons of mass destruction programs. The British Government and the American Government worked for 9 months to convince in negotiations with Qadhafi about what to do with his programs. You want to remember, I want to contrast that with the 12 years of diplomacy that took place at the United Nations when nothing happened. I mean, we had resolution after resolution after resolution just totally ignored by Saddam Hussein—sometimes not ignored but

played with, is a better way to describe it. Nine months of intense discussions with Qadhafi worked because the word of the country—word of this country matters. When you say something, you better believe it. People now trust the word of America. People now understand.

And we're not doing this work alone. I just told you that Great Britain was very much involved with the intense discussions with Colonel Qadhafi. And I appreciate my friend Prime Minister Blair and the people he assigned to—people he assigned to the task. We're working together with people. And that's positive. We're working together with people who love freedom and understand the stakes of the war against terror, people who clearly see a future that's peaceful and positive but understand sometimes you have to make the tough choice to get there. You have to do the hard things to achieve a positive vision of peace and freedom.

There are 34 nations that have joined us in Iraq. That's too long to list. The Senator might fall out on me if I start trying to read them all. [*Laughter*] Thirty-four—[*laughter*]—34 nations stand with us in that country. Thirty-seven nations in NATO are contributing to joint efforts in Afghanistan. I've worked hard to bring people along. I meet with foreign leaders all the time to explain the intentions of America, to talk about what we see in the future.

There is a difference, however, between leading a coalition of nations and shutting down efforts because a few object. It's a big difference. It's the difference between being willing to gather a group of like-minded nations and lead the world towards freedom and peace or allowing some to object and, therefore, nothing happens. That's not the way this administration functions. As I said the other night, we will never seek a permission slip to defend the American people.

This war, this new war of the 21st century, has fallen hardest on our military. And I want to thank those of you who have got relatives in the United States military. And if you do, please tell them the Commander in Chief is really proud of their service.

We mourn for the fallen. We send our prayers to their loved ones, and we thank them for their service. I also want to thank the Guard and Reserve members from around the country—but particularly, now that I'm in New Mexico, from New Mexico—who have served our country so ably and so well.

We've also got thousands of service men and women who are based in this State, at Kirtland and Cannon and Holloman Air Force Bases. The people in the military from this State have done and continue to do vital work on the war against terror. And like everyone who serves in uniform today, you are making this Nation grateful and proud.

And I appreciate their families. I appreciate the moms and dads, husbands and wives who are staying at home as their loved one goes off to defend America and to spread freedom. Their loved ones sacrifice, and so do the families. America's military families are steadfast and strong. Not only should we show them the gratitude, but we need to make them this promise: Your loved one will have the resources you need to fight and win the war on terror.

It's an honor to be here in Roswell. I'm optimistic about the future. I'm optimistic about the future for a lot of reasons, but the main reason is, I'm optimistic about the future because I understand the country. I know the values of America. I know the decency of our people. I know the willingness of the American citizen to serve a cause greater than themself.

It's the great strength of America. It's an unbelievably great country we have, because the people are so strong, so resilient, so compassionate, and so decent. We believe values in our heart that we just won't change. We believe everybody has dignity, everybody has worth. We believe in freedom. We believe people yearn for freedom. We have an obligation to unleash freedom in the world, and we're not afraid to lead. This country stands strongly on the values that make us great, and we're not the least bit afraid of sharing those values in a world that needs peace and freedom.

I'm proud to be here. I'm proud to lead the greatest nation on the face of the Earth. I'm proud to be in front of some of the great citizens of America. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. at the Roswell Convention and Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Robert D. Beckel, USAF (ret.), superintendent, New Mexico Military Institute; Mayor Bill B. Owen of Roswell, NM; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters in Roswell, New Mexico

January 22, 2004

President's Visit to Roswell

The President. I need some ribs.

Q. Mr. President, how are you?

The President. I'm hungry, and I'm going to order some ribs.

Q. What would you like?

The President. Whatever you think I'd like.

Homeland Security

Q. Sir, on homeland security, critics would say you simply haven't spent enough to keep the country secure.

The President. My job is to secure the homeland, and that's exactly what we're going to do. But I'm here to take somebody's order. That would be you, Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News]—what would you like? Put some of your high-priced money right here to try to help the local economy. You get paid a lot of money, you ought to be buying some food here. It's part of how the economy grows. You've got plenty of money in your pocket, and when you spend it, it drives the economy forward. So what would you like to eat?

Q. Right behind you, whatever you order.

Nuthin' Fancy Cafe

The President. I'm ordering ribs. David [David Gregory, NBC News], do you need a rib?

Q. But Mr. President——

The President. Stretch, thank you, this is not a press conference. This is my chance to help this lady put some money in her pocket. Let me explain how the economy works. When you spend money to buy food, it helps this lady's business. It makes it more likely somebody is going to find work. So instead of asking questions, answer mine: Are you going to buy some food?

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay, good. What would you like?

Q. Ribs.

The President. Ribs? Good. Let's order up some ribs.

Q. What do you think of the Democratic field, sir?

The President. See, his job is to ask questions; he thinks my job is to answer every question he asks. I'm here to help this restaurant by buying some food. Terry [Terry Moran, ABC News], would you like something?

Q. An answer.

Q. Can we buy some questions?

The President. Obviously these people—they make a lot of money, and they're not going to spend much. I'm not saying they're overpaid; they're just not spending any money.

Q. Do you think it's all going to come down to national security, sir, this election?

The President. One of the things David does, he asks a lot of questions, and they're good, generally.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:25 a.m. at the Nuthin' Fancy Cafe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Senate Passage of the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004"

January 22, 2004

I am pleased that the Senate has passed the omnibus budget bill, which fulfills important commitments like AIDS relief, education and DC school choice, veterans health care, law enforcement, and other priorities.

This bill stays within the spending limits I proposed, which is necessary as we work to cut the deficit in half over the next 5 years. I will continue to work with the Congress to focus on priorities, cut wasteful spending, and be wise with the people's money. I look forward to signing this bill into law.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Continued Operations of United States Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina

January 22, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of July 22, 2003, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR). The SFOR began its mission and assumed authority from the NATO-led Implementation Force on December 20, 1996. I am providing this supplemental report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to continue SFOR for a period of 12 months in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1491 of July 11, 2003. The mission of SFOR is to provide a focused military presence in order to deter hostilities, stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contribute to a secure environment, and provide, within its means and capabilities, selective support to key tasks and key civil implementation organizations.

The U.S. force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina is approximately 1,800 personnel. United States personnel comprise approximately 15 percent of the total SFOR force of approximately 12,000 personnel. During the second half of 2003, 14 NATO nations and 11 others provided military personnel or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina are assigned to Multinational Brigade, North, headquartered near the city of Tuzla. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes and to conduct counterterrorism operations. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have not sustained any combat-related fatalities.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks to the United States Conference of Mayors

January 23, 2004

Thanks for your kind words, Big Jim. [*Laughter*] I've known him for quite a while, and he's an honorable man who's doing a fine job for the mayors. And I appreciate you all giving me a chance to come by and visit. I've got some thoughts I'd like to share with you about how we can work together to make this country hopeful and safe and secure.

I want to, first, thank you for serving your communities. It's not easy to be a mayor. Probably a lot harder than being a President. After all, I don't have to fill potholes—[*laughter*]—or empty the trash. [*Laughter*] But I do really want to thank you. This country is a fabulous country because we've got good, honorable people who are willing to serve at all levels of government. And one of the key levels of government, of course, is running the city hall, and you're doing a fine job. And I look forward to working with you, and so does my administration.

I do want to thank you all for the invitation. I want to thank Mayor Plusquellic, who's going to be chairman next year. Is that done? Yes—okay, good. I didn't want to jump the gun. [*Laughter*] I look forward to working with you. Mayor O'Neill, thank you very much for having me.

Mayor Riley, it's good to see you, sir. You reminded me, my mother went to high school in the town he runs in South Carolina,

and I reminded him that she graduated—[*laughter*]—like her son, barely.

Speaking about sons, there's nothing wrong with a guy following in his father's footsteps. In this case, this guy is doing it really well. Mayor Daley, I appreciate you. Great mayor.

I appreciate my temporary Mayor, Mayor Williams. He's a really good guy. He's the Mayor of Washington, DC. I notice you were over lobbying Laura the other day to handle a project. [*Laughter*] He knows where the power is in the White House. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you, Tony. He's a good fellow. We worked hard on an interesting education initiative. He took a bold leadership position on education, and we worked with the Congress to get some scholarship money to poor students in Washington, DC, who are going to schools that are failing, that will help liberate them and their parents to be able to choose new schools. And this is a landmark piece of legislation that's going to change people's lives for the better. And the Mayor showed strong leadership. He got out on front on a tough issue, and as a result, the children of this city are going to benefit. And I appreciate you, Mayor, a lot for taking that on.

I want to thank the mayors who are here from Texas. Yes. Behave yourselves. [*Laughter*] Go to bed early. [*Laughter*] Don't whoop and holler. [*Laughter*] But I'm glad you're here. I miss my home State. I love Texas. I love the people who represent our State, and thanks for coming today.

I also want to thank Pat McCrory for meeting me. You might remember he is the mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina. We worked together on brownfield legislation, which, Tommy, I want to thank you and the organization for working on that important piece of legislation. It will change America for the better. It's a collaborative effort between the administration and the mayors to do some good environmental policy that will make communities a better place.

McCrory—I wanted to talk about brownfields—of course, he wanted to talk about football. [*Laughter*] And I bet Mayor Menino does too. [*Laughter*] So perhaps I can arrange a little bit of a friendly wager between you two, if it hasn't happened yet. It has happened? Well, that's good. Be careful what you bet. [*Laughter*]

I wish I could report to you that the war on terror is over with and America is safe and secure, but I cannot. I can't tell you that in good conscience because I don't believe in it. The truth is that there's an enemy that still lurks out there. And we must continue to work together to protect our country. It is the most solemn duty of government, is to protect American people.

It's important for all of us in positions of responsibility never to forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. It is natural that we would, as distance passes, that we would kind of try to think for the best and hope for the best and think that time has maybe solved the problem of the first war of the 21st century. It's just not the case. It's not the case, and so we will continue to work with you on homeland security.

My '05 budget has got $30 billion in there for homeland security. That's 3 times the amount spent prior to September the 11th. It's important that the money be spent wisely and focused on the protection of the American people.

Mayor Jim just told me, on the way in he said, "You know, one of the problems we face, we mayors face, is that the money is allocated and gets stuck." And I appreciated that recognition of the problem, and so we'll work with the mayors to make sure it gets unstuck. I understand sometimes it gets stuck not in Washington; it gets stuck at the State level, as I understand. Look I don't—hold on, I'm an ex-Governor, so I'm—[*laughter*]—and we're hosting the Governors pretty soon. [*Laughter*] But it will provide an opportunity to work this out so that it works better.

Listen, I'm not interested in pointing fingers. I'm interested in making the system work better. Our most solemn duty is to work together to protect our people. That is the most important responsibility we have. And I want to thank you for the coordination that is taking place between the Federal Government, the State Government, and the local governments.

I've asked Tom Ridge often, how well are we doing communicating with each other, how good is the city response mechanism?

And the report is very good. And the mayors get the credit. The mayors get the credit for energizing Joint Terrorism Task Forces. The mayors get the credit for good communication. The mayors get credit for good response.

Recently, over the Christmas holidays, Los Angeles and Las Vegas and Washington, DC, and New York were put on especially high alert, and I'm telling you, the mayors and their offices did a fabulous job of coordinating information and activity. And I don't know if they're out there, but mayor, you deserve a lot of credit for doing the right thing and for responding.

I know there's some talk in your communities about the PATRIOT Act. Let me tell you about the PATRIOT Act right quick. We're in a new war, a different kind of war. We need to be able to share information across jurisdictional boundaries at the Federal level. Do you realize, prior to September the 11th, 2001, the CIA could not pass information to the FBI or vice versa? By law, they were prohibited from sharing information. How can you fight a war against terrorists who hide in dark corners of the world and maybe slide into our country if you can't share information? We need the CIA and the FBI to be able to talk to each other.

As I said in the State of the Union, many of the provisions in the law have been used to catch embezzlers or criminals. We need to make sure those provisions stay in the law. We're at war. We're trying to hunt terrorists. It's a different kind of war.

In the old days, you know, you could measure progress based upon tanks destroyed or airplanes brought down to Earth, you know, by missiles or air-to-air combat. It's no longer the way it is in the 21st century. We're on an international manhunt. We have to find these people before they come and get us. And in order to do so, we need the best intelligence and the capacity to share that intelligence across jurisdictional boundaries. The PATRIOT Act is vital for our security, and Congress needs to renew it.

We want to work with you on defending America. The best way to defend America, however, is to stay on the offensive and to find these killers, one by one, and bring them to justice. That's precisely what our Government is doing and will continue to do. There are thousands of military personnel, with aid from intelligence personnel, on an international manhunt. Slowly but surely, we are dismantling the Al Qaida network that caused such great harm to America and still continues to plot, by the way.

I said in the speech the other night that two-thirds of known leaders have been captured or killed. That's a significant number when you think about where we were prior to September the 11th. We're, slowly but surely, demolishing them. If you—if Al Qaida was a corporation in America, you'd have the board of directors somewhat intact, but the operators, the middle management, retired, no longer useful, no longer a part of the problem.

And we're going to stay on the hunt, which requires good intelligence, good cooperation, good participation with friends and allies around the world. As the world saw, there is no hole deep enough from the long arm of American justice.

We're making progress. It's important for America to speak clearly and, when America says something, to mean it. And so when I said right after September the 11th, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant it. I meant it as clearly as I could say it. And the Taliban found out what we meant. Thanks to a coalition, a large coalition of freedom-loving nations, we removed the Taliban from power. And America is more secure for it, because remember, Afghanistan was a haven for training bases. This is where many of the Al Qaida fighters learned how to fight and kill.

And as importantly, the people of Afghanistan are free. They're free from the clutches of one of the most barbaric regimes in history. It is hard for the Western mind to fathom such a regime, a regime that refuses to allow young girls to go to school, but that's the way it was. And today, thanks to our coalition and our deep love for freedom and our intense desire to protect ourselves, young girls go to school in Afghanistan, and the world is better off for it.

And as you know, I made a tough decision to take out Saddam Hussein, and I did so for this reason: September the 11th made it

clear that America can no longer ignore gathering threats. Oceans no longer protected us from harm. We just couldn't say, "Okay, well, there's a gathering threat. Let's just hope it goes away." I'm never going to forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001.

And so, when we saw a threat—we saw a threat; we dealt with it. We dealt in this way: I went to the United Nations, and I said, "You've given this man warning after warning after warning, and he's totally ignored you. You've got to have credibility." We want international institutions to work, but he ignored them. And the more he ignored them, the weaker the United Nations became. So I said, "Let's pass a resolution," which was passed unanimously. "Now let's enact, enact the resolution. Let's be a credible body. Let's be people, when you say something, people believe it for the sake of peace and freedom."

And we moved. We moved against a man who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, attacked his neighbors, a man who we found out subsequently had murdered thousands of men, women, and children and buried them in mass graves, a person who when he found dissenters, tortured them, a person who ruled with utmost fear.

No, we acted in our own—for our own security. No one can say the world is not more safe with Saddam Hussein sitting in a jailhouse. It is more safe, and so is America.

Our most important duty is to protect America. But I also want you to know that something else drives me. And it's that my belief that freedom is not America's gift to the world, but freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. And it's the spread of freedom that will bring peace. Free societies are peaceful societies.

And yet, we're running against a pretty strong current, because some in the world say that certain people, evidently, can't be self-governing and can't be free. That's not what Americans believe. We believe that people—all people from all walks of life—have got freedom indelibly etched in their heart. And I believe this Nation has an obligation to lead the world to be more free and more peaceful.

I know many of you—you hear from families whose sons and daughters are in our military. I try the best I can to thank them for their service. I hope you do as well. I know you do. I know you're just as proud of them as I am. But I want to assure you as leaders in your community, these troops will have the resources they need to be successful in the war against terror.

We're making good progress—we really are—in parts of the world. Afghanistan has now got a constitution which talks about freedom of religion and talks about women's rights. I don't think anybody would have dreamed that would have been possible prior to September the 11th, and now it's a reality. Democracy is flourishing. The world is better off because of that.

I met with some of the city council leaders in Baghdad when I snuck in over Thanksgiving. I hope someday that you're able to welcome them to your own cities. And these are people that are—you can imagine what their vision might be like. First of all, they're overwhelmed with the thought of being free. That makes sense, because they had been locked in this cell of a country by a brutal tyrant. And they're learning what it means to be a free country, and they're learning what it means to be able to get along with their neighbor that may have a different view of how to worship the Almighty. But it's happening.

Adnan Pachachi was with us the other day. He sat next to Laura at the State of the Union. He came to the Oval Office. He's a distinguished gentleman who believes in the possibilities of the Iraqi people. He sees a clear vision of a free country, and we're moving that way, moving toward a basic law that honors minority rights, a basic law that—based upon the principles of human dignity.

I hope to have the sovereignty passed over, and I think we will, by June the 30th. But there's still work to do—you read about it in your newspapers—because people are trying to shake our will. That's what you've got to understand is happening. They're willing to kill innocent life to shake our will, but thugs and assassins will not intimidate America. We will stay the course until the job is done, because a free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will make the world more peaceful. These are historic times. This is an

historic opportunity to change the world, and America will continue to lead.

At home, I'm optimistic as well. I'm optimistic because I see the economy is growing. That's important for the health of our cities. And it's getting better, and statistics say it's getting better. One aspect about the growing economy that I believe speaks to why it's growing is the tax cuts we passed. We'll have a philosophical argument about that here in Washington, DC, of course. I look forward to it. But I will tell you that one of the things in the tax relief plan that I hope you find inspirational for your cities is it is aimed at the entrepreneur. Much of the tax relief is aimed at the small-business owner. And the truth of the matter is the vibrancy of the inner cities of our country depend upon ownership.

When more people own a small business, when people are starting their own business, when people are creating small businesses, they're creating jobs. They're not only creating a more vibrant and hopeful community; more jobs are being created. And the tax relief we passed was, in part, aimed at small businesses for this reason: Most small businesses are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S corporations, and they, therefore, pay tax at the individual income tax rate. And so, therefore, when you reduce individual income taxes, you're injecting capital into the small business-sectors of America's cities.

The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. You know it as well as I do. The desire for some to own their business is strong, and the tax relief we passed helped invigorate that spirit.

So this economy is growing, and we've got to make sure people are prepared to meet the jobs of the 21st century. It starts with making sure there's a literate America, which—make sure that the schools work well. No Child Left Behind Act—let me tell you my view of that important piece of legislation, since I was the person that asked Congress to pass it. I said, first of all, "We'll increase the budgets," which we have done by 49 percent since 2001. But I've also said, "In return for additional money, primarily aimed at Title I students, we should expect results." You see, some people aren't interested—well, I'm sure they're interested in results. They just don't want to measure results, and I think that's a shame. If you believe that every child can learn, then you want to know whether or not that's happening. It seems like to me that if the expectation is for excellence, we ought to measure.

We ought to measure in a way that is open, measure in a way that puts the results out for everybody to see, including the mayors. So you know for a fact whether or not the obligations of our society are being met to the youngest of our children. In the bill, in the No Child Left Behind Act, not only do we insist upon local control of schools, an accountability system designed at the State or local level, we also say that when you see failure early, there's additional money to make sure children aren't left behind. This is an important piece of legislation, and I will resist any attempt to undermine it.

I laid out the other night a Jobs for the 21st Century program. A part of that is to make sure there's additional money to help junior high and high school students who have been just simply shuffled through the system. And that's what's happened, as you know. If you want to be blunt about what has taken place, sometimes when you don't measure, you just shuffle kids through. Then you wake up at the high school level and find out that the literacy level of our children are appalling. I expect you, as mayors, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I challenge you to keep raising that bar and standards.

And we want to help here. We've got money for that. We've got money for additional grants for Pell grants for low-income kids who are taking a good, strong curriculum. I told you what the Mayor did. He's challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. It might not have been the most politically popular thing in certain editorial pages or around the city, but he's taken the lead. He's not afraid to lead, and that's what we expect from people at the local level when it comes to insisting that every child learn and no child be left behind in America.

I also hope you work with your community colleges. The community college system provides a great opportunity to make sure you match willing workers with the skills necessary to occupy the jobs of the 21st century.

Some of you who have been around long enough may remember the old days when they had workforce training requirements that said, "Just go train people." So they'd go out and train 1,000 hairdressers for 50 jobs. You'd have 950 well-trained hairdressers, but they weren't working.

We've got to make sure the workforce training programs focus on the needs of the employers. And I know many of you are doing that in your communities and many of you are working with your local chambers. I went to Phoenix, and if the mayor is here, thank you, Mr. Mayor, for your hospitality. But there is a really interesting collaboration between the high-tech community and the community college system, all aimed at providing people with the skills so that when the job base expands, and as it is in many communities, they've got the skills necessary to fill the work.

There is a health care shortage of workers in America. You need to work with your community colleges to make sure that those colleges are able to provide the skills in the health care industry so that people who want to work can do so. And that's what we're talking about when you hear about this community college initiative of $250 million. I certainly hope the Congress listens as well, because it makes sense to use the community college system wisely.

Speaking about workers, I want to talk about illegal immigrants who are working in your cities. I believe strongly that this Nation is a nation of rule of law, and therefore, we must be open about what's taking place. And as you know, there's a lot of people here on false papers who have been smuggled in by "coyotes," who have risked their lives to come and do what many of us—many of our citizens do, which is to work hard to put food on the table for their families. And they're here, and they're working, and they're making a contribution to the economy. And yet we don't have a system to deal with them, do we? We have a system that's underground, that's in the shadows of society. And in my judgment, that's not right.

So what I think we need to do is have what I call a temporary-worker program, to issue a card, a temporary-worker card that's legitimate and real, that says, if you're a willing American employer, you can hire a willing foreign employee that has a temporary-worker card, so long as there's not an American worker available. In other words, people are doing jobs Americans aren't doing. And they're coming to our country, and they're taking great risk. And we've got a lot of Border Patrol agents trying to chase the good, hard-working people down. If we make the system work right, if we make it legitimate, then our Border Patrol will be able to chase down true threats to our national security. They'll be able to focus on the threats. We won't be putting our employers in a position where they're hoping the documentation that's presented to them is real.

Now, this isn't an amnesty program. Let me be clear about this. This is a temporary-worker program to be registered and aboveboard. I oppose amnesty because amnesty—amnesty would encourage further illegal immigration. And I oppose amnesty because amnesty would reward those who have broken the laws of the United States. We've had people in line trying to become a citizen of our country. They've been waiting in line for a long period of time, and this program will not allow people to jump ahead in the line of those who have been here legally.

I think this is a realistic approach to make sure the employer-employee relationship is honest in this country. And I also think it's necessary. I think it's necessary because I don't like the thought of hard-working citizens, no matter where they may be from, not willing to report abuse, for example, because they'd then get shipped home and wouldn't be able to do their job as a mom or a dad. This is a humane country, and we need to treat people humanely, with good, reasonable, commonsense law. I look forward to Congress to getting it passed. I thank you for giving me a chance to explain that piece of policy.

I'm winding down. I'm sure Daley is wondering when he's going to quit. [*Laughter*] Being from the Windy City he's—[*laughter*]—he sees the President is a little windy, himself. [*Laughter*]

Let me talk about housing right quick. I know housing is important for the mayors. We want people owning their own home in

America. This administration has been consistent about promoting what I call an ownership society. You heard me talk about creating environments for the entrepreneur to flourish. I want people owning their own home. Homeownership is high in America. I think it's the highest ever, which is really positive. It's positive for our country. We understand, when somebody owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of this country.

But we've got more work to do. There's still a minority homeownership gap in America. I think here at the mayors', I laid out some initiatives that, in the past, one of which just recently passed the Congress, which is the downpayment assistance program. I'm asking Congress for $200 million to help people with their downpayment. As you know better than me, many citizens have the desire to own a home, but they don't have the dough to make the downpayment. And therefore, they balk at making the decision. So we want to help families with downpayments, and we've now got a plan to do so. Congress needs to fund it. It's authorized. It now needs to be funded.

The print on these contracts is a little too fine for first-time homebuyers. And frankly, it's a little too fine for multiple-time home buyers. It's hard to understand the contracts. And I know HUD is working to simplify the contracts and to make it easier and less expensive for people to enter the process of buying a home, by simplifying the forms.

I don't know if you felt it yet. We're expanding counseling services around the country, many times run by faith-based groups, by the way, to help people understand what it means to buy a home. First-time homebuyers are sometimes confused by not only the regulations but the obligations. And we've got counseling services being expanded out of HUD. And if you haven't had one in your neighborhood, call HUD. Get them to show up. It's a useful service. It's a helpful service to close the homeownership gap.

I'm going to talk to the Congress about allowing the Federal home administration to permit zero-percent downpayment loans to low-income Americans. That needs to happen in order to encourage more homeownership. And Congress also, by the way—and they need to pass the single family housing credit to help people who are building these homes, these affordable homes inside America's cities.

And we're making progress, by the way. The gap is narrowing. There's more work to do. I look forward to working with the mayors to close the minority homeownership gap in America, for the good of the country—for the good of your cities, but for the good of the country as well.

Let me conclude by talking about a really important domestic initiative, at least as far as I'm concerned, and that's the Faith-Based Initiative—see if I can explain it properly to you. First of all, we strongly believe in the separation of church and state here in Washington, DC, and that's the way it's going to be. Secondly, I love the fact that people are able to worship freely in our country, and if you choose not to worship, you're just as patriotic as your neighbor. Freedom of religion means freedom to practice any religion you choose or the freedom not to practice.

Thirdly, there has been discrimination against faith-based programs in Washington, DC. Sure, you can receive a Federal grant, but you have to take the cross off the wall in order to do so or the Star of David down or the crescent. Well, how can you be a faith-based program if you can't practice your faith? All of a sudden, you become just another program.

Fourthly, I want you to know that out of frustration with Congress, I've asked them to pass a Faith-Based Initiative. I just decided through Executive order to open up as much Federal money as we possibly could, the grantmaking process, to faith-based programs, to let them apply. We want people of faith involved in solving people's lives.

I know that you have opened an office to expedite Federal monies or the process or the grantmaking progress—process—for your faith-based programs in your communities. I urge you to take advantage of it. I urge you to take advantage of it. You know as well as I do that many of the problems your citizens face are problems of the heart—addiction—and programs sometimes work. Government programs sometimes work, but sometimes they don't work. And

sometimes it requires a higher power than a government program to help change a person's life. You've got armies of compassion in your communities that I'm confident, by working together, we can unleash, for the betterment of the people we serve.

You know, I was down in New Orleans. Ray Nagin is the fine mayor of that city. And we had a Faith-Based Initiative there, and he has got a faith-based coordinating group to not only work in the city but with the State of Louisiana. I also urge you—kind of like the grant problem we got in other areas, sometimes the money goes to the States, and if the State is not anxious to be involved with the faith programs, it gets stuck and doesn't make it to you. And so I urge you to work with your Governors to make sure that their faith-based offices are up and running and that they help cut through the inherent prejudice toward faith programs, the inherent prejudice in government.

And I'm talking about all faiths, by the way. There's fantastic Jewish charities in America that are helping change this country, one soul at a time. You ought to look at those and welcome them and encourage them. Same with the Muslim charities and, of course, the Christian charities that are strong. This Government is—will continue to work hard to make sure this vision becomes reality.

Jim Towey—raise your hand, Towey; right over there—he runs the faith-based office in the White House. We've got faith-based offices throughout bureaucracies. I see that the Deputy Secretary of HUD designee is with us. We've got a faith office at HUD that can be used by mayors and community groups to access Federal money. Billions of dollars are now available. I encourage you—I encourage you to use this source of fund and empower one of the greatest strengths we have in our country, the faith community.

There are other initiatives. I laid out the prison initiative, $300 million to help on the prison reentry program. This will make a big difference in your communities. It will make a big difference in people's lives. Call upon your faith-based programs to help with these souls that are looking for help. You know, the clinical probation program sometimes works. But oftentimes, it's helpful to have somebody with their arms out there saying, "I love you, brother," or "I love you, sister. What can I do to help you reenter our society?"

That's not exactly the traditional approach, I readily concede, to prison—to rehabilitation programs. I know that. But sometimes traditional rehabilitation programs have fallen short of the mark. Sometimes, it's that extra ingredient called love that will make a fundamental difference in somebody's future. And our houses of worship are houses of love. That's what they exist for. The universal call, love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself, is a important part of the soul of your community. Use it. And the Federal Government want to help you.

Towey's job is to make sure that we cut through the strings, to make sure your faith groups are able to access the money without losing their faith. You're going to hear people say, "Why do I want to interface with the Government? They're going to call me to have to do something I don't want to do." Towey's job—and by the way, just to show you what kind of society we have, before he came, he was Mother Teresa's lawyer. [*Laughter*] I'm not going to get into lawsuit abuse—[*laughter*]—but he's doing a good job. And his job is to make sure that the armies of compassion are unleashed.

So those are the things that are on my mind. I thank you for giving me a chance to come by and share them with you. I'll tell you what else is on my mind. I understand '04 is going to be a difficult year for some. But I want you to know this—[*laughter*]—I want you to know this. I don't want—I don't want politics to get in the way of me doing my job and you doing your job for the people. I want you to know, I assure you—I understand it, and so do you. But let us not let the elections get in the way of our solemn responsibility. I don't care what your party is. I don't care who you're for, for President. I have a job to do, and so do you. And by working together, by working together on key initiatives in a way that respects our differences, honors our values, we can do our job for America.

And that's what I expect of you, and I know that's what you expect of me. And together,

we're going to make this country continue to be great. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Capital Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor James A. Garner of Hempstead, NY, president, U.S. Conference of Mayors, who introduced the President; Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic of Akron, OH, vice president, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach, CA, advisory board chair, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., of Charleston, SC; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Adnan Pachachi, Acting President, Iraqi Governing Council; Mayor Phil Gordon of Phoenix, AZ; and Roy A. Bernardi, Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Remarks Honoring the 2003 World Series Champion Florida Marlins

January 23, 2004

The President. Thank you for coming. Please be seated. *Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca.* [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming to the White House. I'm honored to be here to welcome the world champs, the Florida Marlins. Maybe this will cause one of your biggest fans to stop bragging, the Governor of Florida—[*laughter*]—my brother. I appreciate you being here, Jeb. Thanks for coming. It's good to see you. [*Laughter*]

I don't know if you know this or not, but I've had the fortune of being a part of baseball, and I've never been so impressed by a club that came together and played together as the Marlins. It speaks a lot to the ownership and the manager and the support personnel and the players, that they were willing to play together to win. And they won when a lot of people said they weren't supposed to win, which is the way we kind of like it here in Washington, DC. [*Laughter*]

I remember when my friend Pudge Rodriguez stood up to the world and said, "2003 is going to be the year of the Marlin." And a lot of people said, "I'm not so sure he knows what he's talking about." Turns out he did know what he's talking about, and I want to congratulate Pudge. I've known him—I'll never forget when he first came up. I think it's true that he got married on the same day that he got a hit—is that right, Isabel? The same day he got his first big league hit?

Mrs. Rodriguez. Yes.

The President. Yes, that's right; yes. [*Laughter*] The same day he got his first big-league hit—I think it was against the Chicago White Sox——

Audience member. It was.

The President. ——he got married. And here he sits as a member of the great world champs. Pudge, congratulations for being a good friend and a great player.

You're so good about predicting victories, you got any suggestions for, like, '04? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*].

The President. I hope so.

I do want to thank Porter Goss and Tom Feeney, Congressmen from the great State of Florida, great supporters of the Marlins, for coming. I appreciate you boys being here. They left—they let an interloper in here, Howard Coble, he's the Congressman from North Carolina. You're wondering why a guy from North Carolina is here. It's because he and the manager are members of the Old Geezers Club—[*laughter*]—and they're friends. Howard is a good one, isn't he?

Mr. Jack McKeon. That was nice, and for that compliment, here you go. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Mr. McKeon presented the President with a cigar.*]

The President. Thank you, sir. But Howard is a good one. Howard is a good one. Appreciate you coming.

Mayor, I'm glad you're here. Manny—Mayor Diaz is here. Congratulations for being the mayor of a great city. Jeffrey Loria and Sivia have been friends of mine for a long time. And one of the most joyous phone calls I have made since I was the President was to call Jeffrey and congratulate him on being the owner of the world champs. And gosh, the joy in his voice was just worth the phone call.

See, what you don't know is when I was fortunate enough to be with the Rangers, he was the owner of the AAA Oklahoma City club, our AAA affiliate. So we got to know

each other, and every time we'd call up a good player, he'd call and get madder than heck about it, and say, "You're running me out of talent." And I'd say, "Well, that's what happens when you're in the minor leagues." And here he is in the major leagues, the world championship, and I never even came close. [*Laughter*] But I want to congratulate you, Jeff, for being a solid owner.

David Samson came through one of these endless receiving lines that politicians stand in. And he said, "I'm David Samson." I said, "I know who you are." He said—I said, "How's the club look?" He said, "We're going to win it all this year." And I kind of dismissed him like another crank and moved him on. [*Laughter*]

Team member. Just like everybody else. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. And lo and behold, he was right. David, congratulations. And I appreciate you bringing Cindi.

Larry Beinfest is the general manager. It's hard to be the general manager of any ball club. It's hard to figure the right ingredients and to put it all together, but he has. And Larry, I want to congratulate you—and congratulate you and Jeff for figuring—David for figuring out that Jack McKeon was the right catalyst to serve as the manager of the club. He's what I call the Donald Rumsfeld of baseball—[*laughter*]—kind of crusty but knows what he's doing, you know? [*Laughter*] And I want to congratulate you.

You've started a trend, recycling old guys to bring championships. [*Laughter*] But you know what you're doing. You're a great baseball man, which is a high compliment. And you're standing up here as a world champ, and it must be a thrill.

I appreciate Ozzie Guillen being here. First, I want to congratulate Ozzie for going over to the White Sox to be a—to be the manager. I remember when Ozzie was a shortstop for the White Sox and he always had such a wonderful smile on his face. It was a joy to watch a guy participate in obviously an activity he loves so much. And Ozzie, I want to congratulate you for not only being a world champ but for now being in a position where you can bring a world championship perhaps to the Chicago—the south side of Chicago.

The Hawk, Dawson is with us, Andre Dawson as well. He's another great champ. One reason why this organization obviously did well is it found excellence and incorporated excellence throughout the organization. Tony Perez as well, a hall-of-famer. I mean, Jack and Jeffrey were not afraid to find the very best people they could and say, "Help us fashion a team," and you did. And I welcome you all here.

I do have to take some credit for the success. [*Laughter*] You know how politicians are. You got Doug Davis, former Ranger—[*laughter*]—a guy we used to call Rosie, Wayne Rosenthal is the pitching coach, former Ranger, Perry Hill, former Ranger. [*Laughter*] Somehow, the Rangers deserve a little bit of credit, you know? We never—[*laughter*].

I want to congratulate the three folks I just named. I got to know them there in Arlington. Really fine people as well. I know it's a thrill for them to be here as well. I do want to help the team a lot.

You know, champs are people that play hard, play smart, and play as a team, and that's exactly what the Marlins did. The kind of a lineup that was pesky at the top, tough in the middle, and reliable at the bottom. And you could field your positions, and it was a true team effort to win.

I'll never forget watching the classic Series game against the Yankees in Australia. The time thing was a little awkward, so we taped it. But it was a dramatic victory, and it spoke to the character of the team. And this team does have character, and it's character not only on the field but off the field. And the other night in the State of the Union, I said something I think is vital, that professional sports has got an obligation to send the right message to our children.

And there's ways you do that. One is you play hard and play fair, and when you win, you're good sports. Another way to do it is you keep your bodies clean. And I hope the Florida Marlins and the players and players all around America join me in getting rid of steroids out of sports right now, so as to send the right signal to our kids and help parents raise healthy children. Character matters. And these performance-enhancing drugs say, "What matters more is achievement over

character." And that's just not the way we think, and championship teams are teams made of character.

I also appreciate so very much the fact that the players and the organization understands that when you've got the spotlight, you have an obligation to serve your community. And I'm very aware that the Marlins management contributes to Florida's Adopt-a-Classroom program. I appreciate that, Jeffrey, and I appreciate you using your position to not only provide entertainment for the people of South Florida but to help lives, improve lives one person at a time.

I appreciate the fact that Josh Beckett—a big, old Texan I might add—[*laughter*]—is involved with youth baseball. I hope that youth baseball reaches into places where a lot of kids may have lost hope. There's nothing more hopeful than for a person to be able to play on a team and realize their God-given talents on the athletic field. It's essential that baseball brings us joy, to not only suburbia but inner-city America as well. And Josh, I appreciate you understanding the vitality of youth baseball in America.

I appreciate A.J. Burnett working with the Florida division of the Center of Missing and Exploited Children, being willing to be involved, to use his position as somebody who South Florida looks up to, to help children. And what I found interesting is that more than 30 children featured in his "Play It Safe" days at Marlins games have been rescued. You know, winning baseball games is one thing; rescuing children has got to be a fantastic accomplishment. And A.J., I appreciate so very much your heart.

And then there's Juan Pierre. Every team in baseball wants him leading off, feisty little guy that he is and a great ballplayer. [*Laughter*] Yes, don't worry about putting weight on, you did all right. [*Laughter*] Whatever you did last year, do it again this year. [*Laughter*] And keep doing what you're doing—it's called "Pierre's Pack." It brings underprivileged kids to the ballpark. See, he makes a good living, and he's willing to share those hard-earned dollars with the underprivileged kids.

To me, this is what being leaders are all about and champs are about. It's one thing to win on the field, and that's what we're here to herald, and it's a fantastic—fantastic moment for the ballplayers and the fans and everybody involved with the organization. But winners also do things off the field too. Winners understand they have obligations. They've got obligations to be a good mom or a dad. They've got obligations to give something back to the community and to the country that has made this opportunity for them possible.

And the Marlins are fulfilling it all. They won on the field, and they're winning off the field. And I'm grateful. Congratulations to the world champs.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Mayor Manuel Diaz of Miami, FL; Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez, catcher, Florida Marlins, and his wife, Maribel; Jeffrey H. Loria, chairman, chief executive officer, and managing general partner, Florida Marlins, and his wife, Sivia; David Samson, president, Florida Marlins, and his wife, Cindi; Jack McKeon, manager, Larry Beinfest, senior vice president/general manager, Ozzie Guillen, former third base coach, Andre Dawson and Tony Perez, special assistants to the president, Doug Davis, bench coach, Wayne Rosenthal, pitching coach, Perry Hill, first base/infield coach, Josh Beckett and A.J. Burnett, pitchers, and Juan Pierre, outfielder, Florida Marlins.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 17

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

January 18

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

January 19

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

January 20

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Minister of External Affairs Yashwant Sinha of India to discuss India-Pakistan and India-U.S. relations.

Later in the morning, also in the Oval Office, the President met with Adnan Pachachi, interim President of the Governing Council of Iraq, and other Governing Council members.

January 21

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Toledo, OH, where, upon arrival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Bruce Vanisacker. He then traveled to Perrysburg Township, OH.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Phoenix, AZ, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Hilary Juel.

January 22

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Roswell, NM, where he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Amy Coppin.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate John J. Young, Jr., to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquistion and Technology.

January 23

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with James A. Baker III, his personal envoy on the issue of Iraqi debt.

The President announced his nomination of Scott H. DeLisi to be Ambassador to Eritrea.

The President announced his nomination of Aubrey Hooks to be Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire.

The President announced his nomination of Joseph D. Stafford III to be Ambassador to The Gambia.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted January 20

Claude A. Allen,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit, vice Francis D. Murnaghan, Jr., deceased.

Paul S. Diamond,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Herbert J. Hutton, retired.

Robert Bryan Harwell,
of South Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of South Carolina, vice C. Weston Houck, retiring.

George P. Schiavelli,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Lourdes G. Baird, retiring.

Submitted January 21

Charles Johnson,
of Utah, to be Chief Financial Officer, Environmental Protection Agency, vice Linda Morrison Combs.

Stephen L. Johnson,
of Maryland, to be Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, vice Linda J. Fisher, resigned.

Gerard Schwarz,
of Washington, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for the remainder of the term expiring September 3, 2006, vice Earl A. Powell III, resigned.

Bradley D. Belt,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Social Security Advisory Board for a term expiring September 30, 2008, vice Stanford G. Ross, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Cynthia Boich,
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2007, vice Thomas Ehrlich, term expired, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Albert Casey,
of Texas, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2009, vice Tirso del Junco, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Clark Kent Ervin,
of Texas, to be Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security (new position), to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Gay Hart Gaines,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2004, vice Ritajean Hartung Butterworth, resigned, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Dorothy A. Johnson,
of Michigan, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2007 (reappointment), to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Robert Lerner,
of Maryland, to be Commissioner of Education Statistics for a term expiring June 21, 2009, vice Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Henry Lozano,
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2008, vice Christopher C. Gallagher, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Ronald E. Meisburg,
of Virginia, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring August 27, 2008, vice Rene Acosta, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Claudia Puig,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2008, vice Winter D. Horton, Jr., term expired, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Fayza Veronique Boulad Rodman,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2006, vice Robert M. Ledbetter, Jr., term expired, to which position she was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Raymond Simon,
of Arkansas, to be Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, vice Susan B. Neuman, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Withdrawn January 21

Mark C. Brickell,
of New York, to be Director of the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, Department of Housing and Urban Development, for a term of 5 years, vice Armando Falcon, Jr., resigned, which was sent to the Senate on June 12, 2003.

Submitted January 22

David Safavian,
of Michigan, to be Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, vice Angela Styles.

Submitted January 23

Scott H. DeLisi,
of Minnesota, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Eritrea.

Aubrey Hooks,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire.

Joseph D. Stafford III,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of The Gambia.

John J. Young, Jr.,
of Virginia, to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, vice Michael W. Wynne.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released January 19

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that Special Presidential Envoy James A. Baker III will travel to Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on January 19–22

Released January 20

State of the Union Excerpts

Advance text of the State of the Union Address

Fact sheet: The State of the Union

Fact sheet: New Initiatives in President Bush's State of the Union Address

Released January 21

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Jobs for the 21st Century

Released January 22

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Progress in the War on Terror

Released January 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2673

Fact sheet: Protecting Communities by Helping Returning Inmates Find Work

Fact sheet: Seeking Fair Treatment for Faith-Based and Community Charities

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.

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